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HISTORICAL GUIDE  
BRECHIN  
AND  
NEIGHBOURHOOD

BY  
WALTER COUTTS

BRECHIN  
BLACK & JOHNSTON

1889





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## P R E F A C E.



IN compiling this little Manual an endeavour has been made to place within easy reach of the tourist a brief sketch of a few of the stirring events which have taken place in the district during the last five centuries, along with notices of some of the more prominent individuals who have taken part in them. The best authorities on the subject have been consulted and generally followed, but where I have seen cause to differ from them, I have given my reasons for doing so in the Notes. The information has been made as full as the limits of the Work would permit, and although much has been left out which might have been recorded, the reader will find a considerable amount of information not previously published in any local work. The routes chosen, apart from their historical interest, present scenery of almost unequalled grandeur and beauty.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity of thanking all those friends who have in any way assisted in what to me has been a pleasant task, more particularly, Mr. Hew Morrison, F.S.A., Scot., to whom I am specially indebted for his most painstaking and judicious revision of the proof sheets and willing counsel in every difficulty.

I would also beg to express my obligations to Messrs. Black & Johnston, who kindly placed at my service the use of their valuable collection of local works, and for their care in the production of the Work.

W. COUTTS.



## HISTORICAL GUIDE TO BRECHIN.

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THE CITY OF BRECHIN is situated on the north bank of the river South Esk, and consists of one principal street, with others converging. Its length from north to south-east is about one mile, and its breadth is about half that distance.

Its origin, like most other burghs, is involved in much obscurity, but it appears to have been a place of some note as early as the tenth century, and it is not improbable that it had been the seat of the Pictish government before that period.

Kenneth III. is believed to have resided here, and the Pictish chronicle states that the king gave the great City of Brechin to the Lord in A.D. 976.

The Picts were converted to Christianity somewhere about A.D. 560 by the preaching of Columba,<sup>1</sup> and it is not improbable that the Culdees, or Kyldees, made Brechin one of their seats of learning shortly after that date.

St. Ninian, the patron saint of Brechin, flourished about the close of the fourth century, and built the first stone edifice erected in this country for the worship of God. He is styled by the venerable Bede "the most reverend Bishop and holy man of the British nation;" but there is

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<sup>1</sup> *Saxon Chron.*

no record of his ever having even visited the city that afterwards adopted him as its patron saint.

Brechin was burned by the Danes about 1014,<sup>1</sup> after the battles of Barry and Aberlemno, where they were defeated by Malcolm II.; but they would appear to have kept possession of the city, for in the following year a great battle was fought between a fresh host of Danes (who landed on the coast of Buchan, in Aberdeenshire) and the Scots under Malcolm, in which both armies suffered so dreadfully that they willingly listened to the offers of the priests to mediate a peace, which was concluded upon the condition that the Danes should leave Moray and Brechin;<sup>2</sup> that neither of the nations, during the lives of Malcolm and Sueno, should attack the other in war; nor should the one give assistance to the enemies of the other; and that the field on which the battle had been fought should be consecrated to the burial of the dead.

Previous to the middle of the twelfth century there is little of a reliable nature in the form of history. We can but faintly trace through the gloom the pioneers of the Cross battling with the superstitious rites and ceremonies of the idolatrous inhabitants of Caledonia, who clung, with a fondness not altogether unknown in modern times, to the established beliefs of their forefathers. Towards the middle of the twelfth century, however, the mist begins to disappear, and history becomes clearer and more reliable. David I., who reigned from 1124 to 1153, rebuilt the monasteries which had gone to decay through age or had been destroyed by the ravages of war, besides founding

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<sup>1</sup> This date is generally given as 1012, but it could not have been in that year, as nearly all historians agree that it took place after the Battles of Barry and Aberlemno, and that these battles were fought after Sueno usurped the English throne in 1013.

<sup>2</sup> Buchanan's *History of Scotland*, vol. i., p. 320.

a number of new ones. To the six bishoprics which previously existed he added four—Ross, Brechin, Dunkeld, and Dunblane;<sup>1</sup> and in order to provide for the support of these Sees, he reduced the succeeding kings almost to poverty by consecrating the greater part of the royal lands to the support of the monks. He was said to be “ane sair sanct” for the crown. To the Bishop and Culdees of Brechin he granted the right of market on Sundays. This right was confirmed by William the Lion,<sup>2</sup> who reigned till 1214.

The Culdee abbot had before this become secularised, and was sometimes styled Leod the Abbot, but often only Leod of Brechin. He was one of the lay lords who accompanied the king, and was not ranked with the clergy. Devonald, Abbot of Brechin, witnessed the confirmation of Turpin, Bishop of Brechin, 1178-80,<sup>3</sup> and about the same time gifted certain lands to the monks of Arbroath<sup>4</sup> for the “weal” of his father, Sampson. Bricio, priore de Brechin, Gillefali Keldi, and Mathalan Keldi, witness a charter, 1178-98. John was Abbot of Brechin in 1219;<sup>5</sup> and with Morgund, his son, who succeeded him, the race of the Culdee Abbots of Brechin disappears.

From this time till the death of Alexander, there is little of importance to notice, due probably to the destruction of the Scottish records by Edward I.

Immediately after the death of Scotland's best king began the contest between Bruce and Baliol and the intervention of the English monarch, which ended in the placing of Baliol on the throne and Edward being acknowledged Lord Paramount of Scotland, and a solemn surrender made to him of the kingdom by the nobles and clergy. Baliol

<sup>1</sup> Buchanan's *History of Scotland*, vol. i., p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. i., p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, vol. ii., p. 269.

<sup>4</sup> *Reg. of Arbroath and St. Andrews.*

<sup>5</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. v.



was no sooner placed on the throne than he was made to feel the humiliating position in which his servility had placed him, and his endeavour to throw off the English yoke brought Edward with a powerful army into Scotland, where, after taking the fortresses of Berwick, Dunbar, Edinburgh, and Stirling, he marched upon Forfar,<sup>1</sup> where he heard Baliol then was. Meeting with no opposition, he came to Montrose, from which he went to Kincardine Castle, and remained there during the night of the 11th or 12th of July.<sup>2</sup> He then proceeded north as far as Elgin, but meeting with no trace of his enemy he returned to Kincardine Castle on the 2nd or 3rd of August. The following day he crossed the North Esk at the King's Ford, and was met by Baliol at Stracathro, where the unhappy Scottish monarch tendered his submission. A few days after he signed his abdication in Brechin Castle, 1296.<sup>3</sup>

About this period arose the champion of Scottish liberty, Sir William Wallace. He visited Brechin in the following year, and after a brief siege wrested the Castle from the English, and partly destroyed it. The Bruce must have honoured the city with a visit in 1310, as, by a charter dated at Brechin on the 4th of December of that year,<sup>4</sup> he granted certain privileges to the Church of Brechin.

The privilege of market, granted and confirmed by repeated charters, appears to have been disputed; but a new charter was granted by David II. in 1369,<sup>5</sup> stating that the whole merchants inhabiting the City of Brechin had free ingress and egress to the waters of the South Esk and Tay, for carrying of their merchandise in boats and ships, upon paying duty accustomed, and that notwithstanding of any grants to the burgesses of Dundee and Montrose, who

<sup>1</sup> Buchanan's *History of Scotland*, vol. i., p. 391.

<sup>2</sup> *Memorials of Angus and Mearns*, 1st Ed., p. 83.      <sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, p. 125.

<sup>4</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. i., p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, vol. ii., p. 7.



are strictly prohibited from troubling the merchants of Brechin. This grant was confirmed by Robert II. in 1372,<sup>1</sup> who two years later addressed a precept to his justiciaries, sheriffs, and provosts, charging them to defend the Bishop of Brechin and the canons of the Cathedral in all their lands and privileges.

Brechin suffered considerably from the effects of the Battle of Brechin, fought at Huntly Hill, about two miles north-east of the city, between the Earl of Huntly, on behalf of James II., and the Earl of Crawford for the Douglasses. Crawford sustained a severe defeat through the treachery of Coless of Balnamoon, who withdrew with all his followers while the fate of the battle hung trembling in the balance.

“Long in suspense the doubtful battle stood,  
And Brechin’s green was deeply dyed with blood.”

Balnamoon’s desertion completely turned the fortunes of the day in favour of Huntly. For this memorable service Huntly had a grant of the lands of Brechin,<sup>2</sup> which he shortly afterwards exchanged for those of Badinzoeh.

A charter, changing the weekly market from Sunday to Tuesday, was granted by James III. in 1466;<sup>3</sup> and in 1488<sup>4</sup> the same monarch granted a charter in favour of the bailies and community of the City of Brechin, by which, in respect of the income of the city being small, and of the faithful services of their predecessors, rendered to the king in times of trouble, he gives and confirms to them the right of levying a boddle for every horse-load of goods brought into the town.

Immediately after the assassination of the Regent Murray, hostilities broke out between the adherents to the cause of

<sup>1</sup> *History of Brechin*, 1st Ed., p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Gordon’s *Earldom of Sutherland*.

<sup>3</sup> *History of Brechin*, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. ii., p. 122.

the unfortunate Mary and the Regent Lennox. At the head of the Queen's supporters was the Earl of Huntly, who, in the end of June 1570, placed a garrison of 160 hired soldiers in Brechin,<sup>1</sup> under the command of Captains Mure and Coutts, giving strict orders to provide for some thousands more against the 2nd August, and then proceeded north to raise his clans. Lennox being informed at Linlithgow of Huntly's proceedings, and that the soldiers not only plundered the inhabitants of the town, but beset the highways and robbed all travellers, he determined to proceed thither and take possession of the place before the return of Huntly, and, if possible, to capture some of the leaders of the faction. Learning that Crawford, Ogilvy, and Balfour were there also, he despatched Patrick Lindsay, William Ruthven, and James Halyburton, provost of Dundee, to raise what forces they could in the neighbourhood of Perth, and to proceed with such speed and secrecy as possible to anticipate the news of their arrival. Notwithstanding the greatest expedition, the alarm of their approach reached Brechin, upon which Ogilvy and Balfour briefly addressed the soldiers, promising to return along with Huntly within three days,<sup>2</sup> mounted their horses and left the town. The soldiers, on thus being left by their leaders, laid hold on whatever weapons were at hand, and about twenty of them took possession of the tower of the Church (probably the Round Tower). The remainder retired to the Castle, and there awaited the coming of the enemy. Lindsay, Ruthven, and Halyburton, with their forces, remained outside the town till the next day, when they were joined by Earl Morton with a troop of eight hundred horse. The forces then lay about the place until Lennox arrived with the main body of the army, numbering about

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the House of Douglas*, vol. ii., p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> *Buchanan's History of Scotland*, vol. ii., p. 590.

seven thousand. The party in the Tower at once surrendered, but those in the Castle vigorously defended themselves for some days, till, learning that they were deserted by Huntly, they surrendered at discretion. Thirty of the poor wretches were immediately ordered to be hanged,<sup>1</sup> and the rest, more dead than alive, dismissed. When the workmen were excavating for the foundations of the bridge over St. Michael's Den, in 1874, they came upon a quantity of human bones, which, there is little doubt, were the remains of these unfortunate victims of Huntly's folly.

Crawford and Ogilvy would appear, shortly after this, to have deserted the cause of the Queen; and in 1573<sup>2</sup> they, along with the Lord Glamis, assembled all the forces of Angus in Brechin, on behalf of the Regent Morton, with the intention of checking the Earl of Huntly should he attempt to march southward. Adam Gordon, Huntly's brother, who was then besieging the Castle of Glenbervy, marched with a few of his best troops against the Lords. Making an attack under cover of night, he drove out the defenders, and took possession of the town and Castle. The Lords, on learning the smallness of Gordon's force, attempted to retake the town in the morning, but were again defeated, had eighty of their soldiers killed, and a large number taken prisoners, among whom was the Lord Glamis.<sup>3</sup> Gordon returned to the siege of Glenbervy, which he shortly afterwards burned to the ground.

In 1644, Brechin was made the headquarters of the Covenanting army in Angus;<sup>4</sup> and in the beginning of the next year, Generals Baillie and Hurray (or Urray) were stationed there with the army sent by Argyle to fall upon

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<sup>1</sup> Buchanan's *History of Scotland*, vol. ii., p. 591; *History of the House of Douglas*, vol. ii., p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Gordons*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>4</sup> *History of Brechin*, p. 56.

Montrose's front, while he himself came up in his rear. Baillie, on learning the issue of the Battle of Inverlochy, remained at Brechin with the intention of intercepting the Royalists in their descent upon the low country. Montrose, in his march southward, after having burned the village of Cowie and ravaged the lands of Dunnottar, encamped at Fettercairn for a few days to refresh his army. During his stay there his troops laid waste the neighbouring lands, and killed the father of the future Earl of Middleton while seated in his chair in the Castle of Caldhame.<sup>1</sup>

Hurray, who was in command of the horse, left Brechin with six hundred of his troopers, with the intention of ascertaining the strength and condition of the royal army. Montrose gave him a warm reception, and after a brief skirmish the Covenanters retreated, got across the North Esk, and returned to Brechin without having suffered much real damage. For some days no movement was made by either army—both commanders having a mutual respect for the other's strength and character. Montrose at length, after having sent home the greater part of the Gordons, marched with the remainder of his army along the skirts of the Grampians towards Dunkeld, where he intended to cross the Tay. Baillie made no attempt to stop him, but, withdrawing from Brechin, hovered on his flank, content with presenting such opposition as prevented Montrose from making his intended descent. On the 29th and 30th of March<sup>2</sup> the two armies remained encamped opposite each other on the banks of the river Isla. Montrose afterwards proceeded on his route towards Dunkeld, and Baillie towards Perth. The Royalist general, being informed that Baillie had gone to the Fords of Forth with the intention of intercepting his progress there, suddenly resolved to

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<sup>1</sup> *Land of the Lindsays*, 2nd Ed., p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Rebellions in Scotland*, vol. ii., p. 37.



attack the town of Dundee—having first sent the weakest of his army, together with his baggage, to Brechin. On the 4th of April<sup>1</sup> he reached Dundee with one hundred and fifty horse and six hundred musketeers, and at once sent a drummer to summon the town to surrender. Instead of complying with his request, his herald was imprisoned, which so enraged him that he at once gave orders to fall upon the town, and treat it with the extremity of military execution. In a few minutes the town was completely in the hands of the enemy, and a scene of plunder and outrage followed, such as humanity shudders to contemplate. Montrose quietly surveyed the terrible scene from the top of Dundee Law, where he was informed that Baillie was rapidly marching down the Carse of Gówrie to the relief of the town, and that he was then only two miles distant. A council of war was at once held. Some of his staff advised that the officers ride off and leave the men to their fate; others, that they should hold their ground and offer the Covenanting general battle. Montrose rejected the first proposition as ungenerous, and the other as imprudent; and after considerable difficulty marshalled his little army—most of them under the influence of liquor—and left the one end of the town just as Baillie entered it by the other, and began his famous retreat, which has been justly regarded as the best piece of generalship ever performed by the noble Marquis. Leaving Dundee at six o'clock in the evening, he marched direct on Arbroath,—Baillie meanwhile having divided his army in two parts, one following in direct pursuit and the other making a circuit with the intention of getting ahead of the Royalists, when they could fall upon and completely destroy them in the morning. Twenty thousand crowns was to be the reward of the brave fellow who took Montrose's head to

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Rebellions in Scotland*, vol. ii., p. 58.

the Covenanting general. Despite numerous attacks on his rear, which were gallantly repulsed, Montrose made good his retreat, and reached Arbroath about midnight. Pointing out the danger of their position to his now worn-out troops, he determined to make another forced march. Instead of taking the route along the coast, away from his enemies, he turned about and made almost a right angle with his former course, passed by Baillie's very side, and before morning crossed the South Esk at the Castle of Careston. Here he allowed his men, who had not slept for two nights, to rest, after having traversed about seventy miles of rough and difficult country. Baillie no sooner learned the trick the Royalists had played him than he started in pursuit, and his horse were within sight of Montrose's camp before he had any notice of their approach. The Royalist general at once roused his soldiers, who were so completely exhausted that the sentinels had to prick many of them with their swords before they would awaken. Having got again into marching order, they retreated into Lethnot, where pursuit was vain.<sup>1</sup> The main body of the army at Brechin, having received notice of Baillie's approach, burned the town, and retreated into Glenesk, where they very soon effected a junction with their general. Baillie devoutly terms this retreat "a pleasant blink of God upon benighted Scotland."

In 1647,<sup>2</sup> Brechin was visited by a plague, of which six hundred of the inhabitants died. Many of the poorer class were taken out to Murlingden, and housed in miserable huts. Those who died there are reported to have been

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<sup>1</sup> Generally stated Glenesk. Chambers says "Montrose, by retiring three miles farther into the recesses of Glenesk, at length reached a place where he could not be approached." Had he retreated to Glenesk he must have traversed over twelve miles.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Brechin*, p. 59.



buried on the spot. So great was the terror of the people that the church was closed, and the religious services were conducted in the fields. The terror was not confined to the town, but appears to have spread into the neighbouring parishes. The records of the parish of Menmuir bear that on the 11th April 1647 there was no service in the church—"Because of the forthbreaking of the plague in Brechin, the minister preached in the fields: therefore no collection."

Brechin was again made the rendezvous of the Covenanting army in 1650. General Leslie, irreverently termed by Father Hay "Argyles Postillion," received orders to "gather together at Brechin all the parties of horse and foot which, since the conclusion of the war, had been dispersed over the country," as an army of protection against the "arch traitor" Montrose and his ill-fated expedition on behalf of Charles II. Leslie mustered over three thousand troops, and despatched Colonel Strachan with two hundred and fifty horse to assist the Earl of Sutherland and other chiefs in the north, who were arming their vassals on behalf of Argyle. Strachan completely routed the royal army near the mouth of the river Oikell, on Saturday the 27th of April, and that day three weeks he delivered the unfortunate Montrose a prisoner into the hands of the Magistrates of Edinburgh.

The town again suffered by fire in 1672,<sup>1</sup> when about sixty of the houses were destroyed, and many of the inhabitants rendered homeless. To alleviate the distress, large sums of money were subscribed in the churches throughout the district. The fire is believed to have been accidental.

By Act of Parliament in 1695, a charter granted by Charles I. in 1641<sup>2</sup> (which appears not to have been acted upon, nor even known) was ratified, and Brechin declared

<sup>1</sup> *History of Brechin*, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. i., p. 20.

a free royal burgh, reserving only the right of the Earls of Panmure "of choosing one of the bailies of the said burgh, who shall be Constable and Justiciar therein, as use is previous." Brechin held of the bishop (who presided over the council) up till 1686. Ten years after (in 1696),<sup>1</sup> Mr. Alexander Young was elected the first Provost "of the free burgh royal of Brechin."

The raising and quartering of soldiers during the close of the seventeenth century, was a great annoyance to the burgh, three companies being quartered in the town in 1695, which Bailie James Cowie, who was appointed Commissioner to the Convention of Royal Burghs, was directed to "make moyance to get off."

When the Earl of Mar raised the standard of revolt in Braemar, James was proclaimed King at the Cross of Brechin, by James, fourth Earl of Panmure, who joined in the unfortunate rebellion. He was attainted, and his estates forfeited in consequence. James landed at Peterhead in December 1715, and on his way to Perth visited the Earl of Panmure at Brechin Castle, and was his guest for two days—2nd and 3rd January. From thence he proceeded on his way to the Fair City, and after playing the King there for a few days he returned to Montrose, where he embarked on a French vessel lying off the mouth of the river, and quitted for ever the kingdom of his fathers.

Brechin shared freely in the troubles of 1745-1746—most of the gentry in the neighbourhood enrolling themselves under the banner of Bonnie Prince Charlie. Lord George Murray led a part of the rebel army through the city on his retreat north in the beginning of 1746. He was followed a few weeks after by the Duke of Cumberland, with the royal army, on his way to Culloden.

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<sup>1</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. i., p. 20.

After crossing the Bridge of Brechin the latter army bivouacked for a short time on the bank of the river, eating what provision they had with them, and, although bread and ale were freely offered them by some of the inhabitants, the duke, who appeared to be apprehensive of the good folks of Brechin, would not allow them to taste either. After a short rest, they were marched round the lower end of the town and past Pitforthie, on their way to the King's Ford, where they crossed the North Esk. Cumberland and his staff rode through the town and joined the army about Cairnbank.

The duke's apprehensions would appear to have been not altogether ill-founded. The Rev. Messrs. Blair and Fordyce, ministers, gave in a representation to the Presbytery, under eight heads, wherein they stated that ten out of the thirteen members of the Town Council were someway or other concerned in the late rebellion, some of them having even drunk the Pretender's health publicly at the Market Cross. The Rev. Mr. Blair, taking notice of these treasonable practices from the pulpit, warned the people against them. The very next day, a daughter of one of the bailies sung a song in contempt of his royal highness the duke, by way of insult upon Mr. Blair.<sup>1</sup>

The inhabitants, suffering from the scarcity of water in the town—their only supply being from private wells—the council purchased the Dove Wells of Cookston in 1766, and introduced a plentiful supply at a cost of about £500. This sum was paid by Lord Panmure some years later, on his acquiring the right to take a supply of water from the town's fountains to Brechin Castle.<sup>2</sup>

In 1785, Andrew Low, a Brechin man, was hanged on Balmashanner Hill, at Forfar, for the crime of theft. This execution is memorable from its being the last carried into

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<sup>1</sup> *History of Brechin*, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, p. 105.

effect by virtue of a warrant of the sheriff.<sup>1</sup> Low was tried and condemned by Patrick Chalmers, Esq., of Aldbar, Sheriff of Forfarshire.

Four men were raised in the burgh in 1769 to serve in his Majesty's navy, at an expense of £100, which was defrayed by an assessment on the burgesses. In 1798 the town further subscribed the sum of £150 to the Loyalty Fund, for the prosecution of the war with France. The "dear years," at the close of the last century and the beginning of the present, "were a source of anxiety to our civic rulers." They voted considerable sums of money in aid of the poor, and in 1800 they opened a Soup Kitchen, a species of charity which it is to be hoped has become a thing of the past.

In 1822 the Town Council, following the example of other burghs, voted an address to George IV., and ten guineas towards the erection of the bronze statue of that monarch now standing in George Street, Edinburgh.

Lord Chancellor Brougham visited Brechin on the 11th September 1834, and was presented with the freedom of the burgh in the cathedral—the venerable pile being crowded in every corner by eager citizens and friends to witness the interesting ceremony.

On the same day it was resolved to form a Joint-Stock Company for the purpose of lighting the town with gas. The resolution was carried into effect, and has turned out a great boon to the inhabitants, as well as a very profitable investment to the shareholders. The old "oilie cruzie" has now entirely disappeared, unless from the repositories of the curious. Lately the electric light was introduced to some of the large public works, but it will in all likelihood be a considerable time before this mode of lighting becomes general. The quantity of gas annually made at

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<sup>1</sup> *History of Brechin*, p. 105.



the Brechin Gas Works is about twenty-one million feet.

The water supply from Cookston becoming inadequate to meet the wants of the increasing population, a new supply was brought from Mooran, a distance of over twelve miles, at a cost of about £15,000. The water was turned on amid much rejoicing by George, Earl of Dalhousie, father of the present earl, on the 10th October 1874—being his first public act after his accession to the titles and estates.

On the 28th August 1881 the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh arrived in Brechin on a visit to the Earl and Countess of Dalhousie at Brechin Castle, where they remained for nearly a week, during which time the Duchess visited several of the public works and places of interest in and around the city. The Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone visited Brechin on 17th September 1884, and was presented with the freedom of the burgh on a platform erected at St. Ninian's Square, in presence of over ten thousand spectators, who assembled to get a glimpse of the "Grand Old Man." After briefly addressing the multitude on the great question of reform, he drove to Brechin Castle, where he was the guest of the Earl and Countess of Dalhousie.

Having thus briefly referred to a few of the leading incidents in the history of Brechin, we will now endeavour to conduct the stranger over the town, and point out and describe the places and objects of interest as we proceed.

Taking the Town House (near the middle of the High Street) for our starting point, we will begin with a short notice of that interesting building. The present Town House was erected in 1789, on the site formerly occupied by the old "Tow Bood," which dated at least from 1573.<sup>1</sup> It contains on the ground floor a court-room, two small

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<sup>1</sup> *History of Brechin*, p. 278.

cells, and a waiting-room. On the first floor is the guild hall, in which the Town Council meet for transacting the affairs of the burgh; an office for the superintendent of police; and a room in which the records of the town are kept, along with a few antique relics, including the "witch branks," an instrument of torture used at the execution of the unfortunate victims of a blinded superstition. The oldest volume of records bears date 1672, and contains a list of the council of that year. After which the records are complete. There is a tradition that the rebels took possession of the Guard House in 1745, and burned all the books and papers they could find within its walls, and that the documents which do exist, previous to that date, were saved by being kept in the town-clerk's house and the steeple of the church; but from the fact that the records are complete from 1672, the year in which a large part of the town was destroyed by fire, we may, with some reason, believe that the older records had been burned at that time. The Town Council originally consisted of thirteen members (exclusive of the bishop), three of whom were bailies; one appointed by the bishop, one by the proprietor of the lordship of Brechin and Navar, and the third by the community of the town.

The historian of Brechin, noticing the first recorded election of councillors, says, they "proceeded according to the good old times, first, to elect themselves, then to set a leet of six persons for bailies. Of the whilk number, my Lord, the Bishop of Brechin, has named and appointed David Donaldson, younger, to continue and officiate as his bailie. And having referred the remaining five to ane noble earl, George, Earl of Panmure, he appointed John Liddle to be his 'bailie and justiciar-depute.'" The council then nominated and appointed David Liddle to continue and officiate as town's bailie. A treasurer, dean of guild, and hospital master being appointed, the elec-



tions were completed, and the "court being fenced, the bailies for the last year did demit their office." Some disturbance appears to have taken place over the election in 1607. A complaint was made to the king and Privy Council that, "though John Leche and Robert Roloch, citizens of Brechin, have been lawfully elected to be bailies of the said citie for the yeir to come, according to the ancient, loveable custome of the said citie, and to the liberty, privilege, and freedome of election proper to the bischop of the said citie of Brechin, some restless and consaitlie persons within the said citie, mislyking the lauchfull forme of governament thairof, and desyrous of novalities, factions, and unquietness, refuissis thair obedyence to the saids majistratis, intertenyes a factoun within the town, and some of them who wer majistratis the yeir proceeding unlauchfullie continueis in thair magistracie the present yeir quhairfra at the lait tyme of electioun they wer ordourlie removed." The Privy Council ordained a proclamation at the Cross, charging all the inhabitants to obey the said bailies for the year to come, and forbid any other person to usurp their office. Robert Rollok was one of the bailies of Brechin in 1600, and in that year he, along with Robert Kymeir of Boithis, also bailie, and David Lindsay, David Dempster, David Carnegie, and Richard Chopman, councillors, became bound in the sum of £1000 not to take any part in the feud between the Earl of Crawford and Lord Ogilvy.<sup>1</sup> In the same year the incorporation of the trades took place, the circumstances attending which cannot be better described than in a complaint by the deacon of the baker craft to the Privy Council against the Magistrates and Town Council in 1602.

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<sup>1</sup> Privy Council Register.

Although the City of Brechin was erected of old into a free burgh royal, with the privilege of guildry and deaconry of each craft, “yit, pairtlie be the negligence and sleuth of the magistrattis of the said citie for the tyme, that pairt of the liberties of the said citie anent the establischeing of deaconis ouer everie craft wes oursene and pretermittit, quhilk gaif occasioun of manyfauld abuses and corruptionis in every craft; quhilkis being at length espyit, als weill be the magistrattis as be the honnest men of craftis within the said citie, and the haille body of the toun being convenit for reforming of the saidis abuses, in end it wes found that the onlie meane of reforme these abuses wes to establich deaconis in every craft, according to the custome observit in all utheris his Majesteis weill governit townis.” Accordingly by an Act, dated 3rd October 1600, it was ordained that the whole of the free-men of the crafts of skinners, cordiners (shoemakers), smiths (hammermen), tailors, baxters (bakers), weavers, bonnet-makers, and fleshers should thereafter meet twenty days before Michaelmas and elect a deacon of each craft, with collector, officer, and other members requisite. The complaint further states that the complainers had expected to enjoy the liberty so provided and to elect deacons of their craft annually; but the magistrates, “bé the instigatioun of some inhabitantis of the citie quhais bypast abuses in thair craft the sadis complenaris hes preissit to represe and remove,” are now endeavouring to “undo the libertie and privilege of thair craft establichit and grantit to them in maner foirsaid.” The Privy Council gave charge to the magistrates to maintain the complainers in the privileges granted them within six days, or appear before the king and Council the tenth day after to answer the complaint. A few days after the “masters and freemen of the baxter craft” bound themselves in the sum of 300 merks to provide themselves sufficiently with wheat and all other

necessaries for furnishing the town with bread. The magistrates appointed a commissioner to appear before the king and Privy Council on the day named, and he, learning that the king was at Falkland, went there, expecting the Council would be there also. Being informed that it was sitting in Edinburgh, he posted thither and arrived in the town a short time after the Council had risen. On an appeal by the magistrates the case was again brought up, and their commissioner appearing, stated that, after taking into consideration the "inhabilitie and povertie" of the bakers, a meeting had been convened, at which the masters of the craft were charged with the "grit hurt" sustained by the lieges and the "grit sclander and reproche to thair toun caused be the want of breid." Acknowledging their fault, they confessed that they had neither substance nor credit, and therefore submitted themselves to the magistrates, promising to fulfil any "proscription of theirs in the matter." The "grit counsall of the said citie" thereafter enacted that it should be lawful to all the freemen of the town to buy flouer, meal, or any other baking stuff, and "caus baik the same upoun ane measour and pryce as should be sett down," and that, in "cais the baxters refuisit to baik the same," they should lose their freedom. The Privy Council adhered to their former deliverance. The Town Council and the "Baxters" appear to have been at variance for a number of years after. In 1603-1604 a load of "quhyt breid" was sent to Aberdeen "to try the baxters' witht." The next year (1605) the bakers appear to have again complained to the king and Privy Council, and the Bailies and Town Council were cautioned in 200 merks each "not to harm George Tailyeour, Thomas Schewan, David Brokhous, James Smyth, Patrik Brokhous, David Dunkesoun, Thomas Merchell, James Andersoun, or James Smyth, younger, bakers and citizens of Brechin." Nearly eighty years after the

honesty of the bakers was again questioned. The members of the craft, after being censured for the insufficient bread offered to the public, were strictly prohibited from meeting together to cheat the community. Some of the tailor craft also appear to have had their honesty suspected. A complaint was made to the trades' convenery court against one of the knights of the thimble for "mismaking a big coat." The case was referred to three of his fellow-tradesmen, who, after a lengthened examination of the spoiled garment, found that the only fault lay in the sleeves being rather tight, which they declared to be caused by the shrinking of the material through exposure to rain and not from the "cabbaging" of the maker. The court rather inconsistently decreed that the poor tailor "widen the sleeves upon his own proper expense." Only six of the corporations appear to have taken up the privileges conceded to them — the hammermen, glovers, shoemakers, bakers, weavers, and tailors. These, however, along with the guildry (incorporated in 1629) formed a large and influential body. The collectors and deacons had the right to vote on the election of the town's bailie, and on the council becoming possessed of the right to elect all the magistrates (through the forfeiture of the Earl of Panmure in 1715), they had also the privilege of voting on the leet set by the council for provost and bailies. The right was first exercised in 1676, and was thereafter continued till 1832, when the Reform Act threw the trades into the shade, and placed the election of the whole council in the hands of the ten-pound voters. The constitution of the council returned to the Convention of Royal Burghs in 1709 shews that it then consisted of thirteen members, whereof eleven were merchants and free brethren of the guild, the remaining two being tradesmen. The provost, bailies, dean of guild, town-treasurer, and master of the hospital were all members of the guildry. The butchers and wrights also formed



societies, but they took no part in municipal affairs further than that they were obliged along with the other trades to furnish two men each for a guard to attend the Town Council to the Trinity fairs.

The patron saints of the various trades were :—

Hammermen	. . .	St. Elois.
Glovers	. . .	St. Bartholomew.
Bakers	. . .	St. Cuthbert.

#### SACERDOTAL VESTMENTS.

Shoemakers	. . .	St. Crispin.
Weavers	. . .	St. Simon.
Tailors	. . .	St. Ann with a child.
Wrights	. . .	St. Joseph.
Butchers	. . .	St. Anthony.

The guardsmen were all armed with halberts, the use of which was sometimes necessary to enforce the decisions of the magistrates.

All these societies and corporations, except the guildry, have practically ceased to exist, several of them having been broken up, and the funds divided among the members. The Town Council records contain many curious and interesting entries regarding the management of the affairs of the burgh and the condition of the inhabitants. Among the oldest of them is a list of the weapons of war belonging to the town from a return made during the general arming of the kingdom after the battle of Bothwell Bridge. The arms consisted of “27 halberts, 10 muskets, 9 pairs bandileers, ane pudder horn, 5 pikes, 2 half pikes, and 5 swords; by an attour 3 swords which the officers have.”

About the beginning of the last century the Town Council, after “taking into their serious consideration that the town’s common lands were altogether ruinous, and that they made little duty or rent therefrom,” agreed to sell them. The lands were accordingly sold to Mr. James

Wood, mason, Leuchland, for the sum of 900 merks, on condition that he "lay the calsay at the North Port, and be it and help the hail calsay from the North Port to the Prentice Nuik." The price was not paid till fifty-three years after (1762), when a slightly different arrangement was made with the purchaser's son, who paid the debt. From the following entries in the accounts of the town the council would appear to have spent two jovial evenings over the transaction.

"Item spent on a council day when James Wood bought the lands at the North Port, £4, 16s. 0d."

"Item spent by the magistrates when settling with James Wood, £10, 8s. 0d."

When Volunteering became the rage in the burgh, the Town Council voted twenty-one pounds towards the expense of providing the corps with uniforms, and made a deduction of ten pounds on the rent paid by the taxman of the bleachfield for his allowing the force to "soldier over it." These and several other liberties taken by the council with the funds of the town produced an uneasy feeling among the inhabitants and caused them to petition for retrenchment and reform in the administration of public affairs. Whether the petition had the desired effect at the time does not appear, but a little over thirty years later (1849) the burgh funds were at such a low ebb that the council resolved to discontinue the lighting of the public lamps, the ringing of the bell morning and evening, the keeping of the public clocks, and even the allowance of entertainment at the Trinity Muir and other fairs. Fortunately the town's funds are again in a healthier condition, and those of our civic rulers who are not "T.T." enjoy a glass of toddy at the "Big Tarnty" market. The magistrates of Brechin appear to have failed in some instances to be a terror to evil doers.

About 1765, Robert Strachan, kirk officer, "presumed to

vilipend and abuse the bailies," and to declare that he did not "care a —— for the bailies of Brechin." Robert, like most beadies of his time, had no doubt thought himself of no little importance. We remember hearing a story of a church officer who, on being asked by some members of a neighbouring kirk session if he could recommend any one to them for a beadie, replied, "Weel no; if it had been a minister or a precentor bodie I cud hae moyned you till a dizzen o' them, but I dinna ken o' a bedle the noo ava."

Many anecdotes are related of the bickerings between the old red-coated officials (who were the guardians of the peace previous to the introduction of the gentlemen in blue) and the magistrates. William M'Arthur, one of the town officers about the beginning of the century, not unfrequently dictated the sentences to be pronounced in court. On one occasion, being gently reprimanded by the provost for some misconduct, he pulled off his coat and tossed it in the magistrate's face, telling him to wear the livery himself. M'Arthur's brother officer (James Hutton) was also a personage of no little importance. When any of the bailies ventured to differ in opinion from him he generally replied, "Well, bailie, you may do as you like, but what I say is the law." The officers were not the only individuals who gave the bailies trouble; the prisoners not unfrequently dictated to their honours. The following case will give some idea how business was conducted in the police court half a century ago. Two citizens (whom we will call Willie and Geordie) were summoned before the court for some alleged breach of the law. The bailie told Willie to state his version of the story, which he at once commenced to do, but was immediately interrupted by Geordie (who, like a prisoner on hearing a learned judge summing up his case to the jury, remarked to his lordship, "Man ye dinna look at it in the same light's me ava") with "That's a lee." "Wheest man," said the bailie; "yeel get

your turn in a whillie." Willie again proceeded to tell his story, but was immediately met with "I tell you that's a lee." After considerable difficulty, amid continued interruptions, both sides of the case were heard. The magistrate then addressed the prisoners—"I see how it is, yer baith rang, an I'm to fine ye a shillin." Geordie interrupting, "Weel, if Willie's ready wi his saxpence, I'm ready wi mine." The bailie, "I see ye dinna understand me; I mean to fine ye a shillin tha piece." Magistrates who thought a fine of one shilling sufficient punishment for petty offences have been unknown in the court-room of Brechin for a long period, and we would advise those who have no wish to part with twenty-one shillings or pass a like number of days in one of Her Majesty's free lodging-houses to avoid an interview with a Brechin bailie of the present day while seated on the bench.

The Privy Council of James VI. sat frequently in the Town House of Brechin during the years 1600-1-2. The first court was held on the 9th October 1600, at which three complaints against Lindsay of Balgai for "spulyie, violence and oppression" were heard. Two of the complaints were dismissed and the third continued. William Dow, alias M'Vorie, was denounced rebel for failing to answer a charge of "thiftiouslie," retaining eleven oxen belonging to the "puir fatherless barinis" of the late Patrick Ramsay, in "Hilton." There being no other complaints the Council left the next day. The next year His Majesty again made a circuit of the country, and on the 10th October ordained "ane officer of armes to pas to the mercat croceis of Brechin and Monros, and utheris placis neidfull, and thair be oppin proclamation mak proclamation of his Hienes' intentioun to reforme, repres, and punishe the grit enormiteis and maisterfull oppressiones committit upoun his Hienes' guid subjectis" by numerous "notorious malefactouris (some of thame being of guid birth and



calling)," and to "warne all and sindrie his Majesties liegeis and subjectis quha ar onywyse distressit and grevit that thay gif in thair complaintis to his Majestie, or otherwyse gif prevey information thair of to some of his Hienes' domestiquis." The Council thereafter met on the 13th, the Earl of Montrose (chancellor) presiding. A complaint by James Olyphant of Turnings against John Dick and George Findlaysoun, tenants of David, Earl of Crawford, was heard. Olyphant having obtained decree against Crawford and certain of his tenants of the lands of Othlaw for payment of an annual rent of forty bolls of victual, raised letters of pounding, and seized a number of cattle and sheep belonging to the forementioned tenants. While the officer was attempting to remove the stock, the defenders attacked him with "halbats, guns, and staves," and after declaring that they "cared not for the king, violently reft the goods from him;" being found guilty, the prisoners were committed to the Tolbooth of Brechin "and detained in ward till order be taken for their further punishment."

The Council met again on the 17th, His Majesty presiding. A dispute between Beaton of Melgund, Wood of Bonnyton, and Lindsay of Balgay, in regard to the teinds of the Kirkton of Aberlemno, was decided in favour of Beaton. Another of the same nature was remitted to the Lords of Council and Session for trial.

The Marquis of Huntly was rebuked by His Majesty for carelessness in the execution of the laws within the bounds of his northern lieutenancy, especially for his laxness in dealing with Gordon of Gight, whom he was commanded to apprehend and bring "quick or deid" to His Highness. He was also commanded to apprehend all Jesuits and all persons "lying at the horn," and cause them to satisfy the treasurer in regard to their escheats or else to pursue them, conform to the duty of his office. Huntly, along with John Gordon, his depute, promised to faithfully obey His

Majesty's commands so that he should have no further cause of complaint. On the following day a further proclamation was made at the Market Cross of Brechin, warning all the lieges in Angus who had complaints to make to give in the same to His Majesty, or the treasurer, on or before the 24th day of October. On that day the Council again met (the king presiding), when a large number of complaints were before them. One by David Wylie, in Middleton, against several persons who had waylaid him while coming out of the Kirk of Fettercairn from the Holy Communion, and wounded him with swords and other weapons on the 25th of April 1599, and again in the month of June of the same year, they had "shot pistols" at him from the windows of a house while he was passing. The decision is not recorded. A widow in Farniehill (probably Thornyhill) complained that William Wood (a brother of the laird of Balbegno) had in 1596 "reft from her twelve sheep and three kye." She had in consequence been compelled to beg for "laik of fuid." And having complained to the Sheriff of Kincardine, the accused "pat violent hands on hir, dang and strack hir and said gif ever he fand her plaining on him he sould cast hir in a peitpot and droun hir." Wood was committed to ward in the Tolbooth of Brechin, and ordered to be detained till he restored the said goods to the complainer. John Robertson of Stralochie and his son were denounced rebels for not producing William Dow, *alias* M'Vorie, who was put to the horn the previous year. Thomas Beg, in Pitforthie, complained against Thomas Lyal and others for carrying away an ox, worth 40 merks. Lyal was ordained to restore the ox or its value, and to find caution in 200 merks for the indemnity of the pursuer. The Marquis of Huntly having failed to apprehend Gordon of Gight, that individual was again denounced as a rebel for having deforced an officer in the discharge of his duty, "and in rage and furie rave

the letters oute of his sleif, rave them in pieces and kaist them in the fyre." There being no further complaints, the Council again left the city.

They returned again the next year (1602), and held frequent sittings between the 24th March and 21st April. The king presided at the first sitting. The only business being the entry of certain defaulters by Campbell of Glenorchy. The next day Lord Forbes, Forbes of Towie, and Gordon of Barclay were denounced rebels for having failed to answer a charge against them, by Sir David Wood of Craig, of ravaging the lands of Glenfarquhar, in the Mearns, and having "reft" from him and his "poor tenants six score nolt, twelve score sheep and two mares." "Alexander and James Elschenderis" [Alexander] complained that William Brabner, in Fettercairn, after having shamefully murdered their brother David, "fled with the bludy hand to the dwelling-house of Alexander Lindsay of Broadland, where he was resettet dyvers days and nychts." Lindsay was acquitted, it being proved that he had no knowledge of the murder. Several complaints were lodged against Sir James Hamilton of Liberton, and others, for assault and deforcement. None of them appearing, they were pronounced rebels.

The Earl of Montrose presided at the sittings on the 6th, 7th, and 8th April, when a large number of persons were denounced rebels, among them being Alexander, Bishop of Brechin, for not answering to a charge of remaining at the horn. The Sheriff of Forfar and the Bailies of Montrose were ordered to apprehend them, take their houses, remove their families "furth thereof," make inventory of their goods, and report the same to the treasurer.

Balfoure of Burley, having imported a quantity of arms for furnishing the lieges for the defence of the country, complained that certain persons had refused to purchase

any of the said arms from him. The decision is not recorded.

The Council sat in Montrose on the 13th, and again charged the Marquis of Huntly to enter certain "Papists," still at large in the north, "the said persons not having purged themselves of the excommunication under which they were laid, but still remained in this country practising against the true religion."

Returning to Brechin, they met on the 15th, 19th, 20th, and 21st. The Bishop of Brechin appears to have satisfied the Council, as he, along with Robert Grahame of Hedderwick and others, was appointed to assist the Sheriff-Depute of Forfar in the trial of John Low and his spouse, both belonging to Montrose. The crime is not specified, but it appears to have been of a serious nature, as Mr. Arthur Erskine, bailie of Montrose, was committed to the Tolbooth of Dundee for having failed to deliver the said John Low to the Sheriff-Depute. "His Majesty being careful that the burgh of Montrose be not destitute of government seing the uthier bailie is presently furth of this realme at his lauchfull trade," the Town Council were requested to undertake the administration of affairs, "with the strict custody of all persons warded in the Tolbooth." Then follows an act of caution, wherein the Lord Glamis was bound in the sum of 10,000 merks either to pursue the Earl of Crawford criminally for the murder of his father, or else to submit the feud standing between them to arbitration. A Richard Smith complained that Patrick Bruce of Fingask sent a number of men to his house who, having "nathar reuth nor compassion, cruelly hurt and wounded him, his wife and barnes," and then "reft from him five oxen, two kye, two horses, six firlots of oats, and 24 ells of linnen cloth." And on another occasion they broke his "plough, took the horses, destroyed his harrows, and skaillit and drownit his haill quheit." The complainer



failed in his proof. A large number of complaints, principally for "spuilyie" follow, and one, by Janet Paterson against Sir David Lindsay of Edzell, for fire-raising and eviction. The complaint set fourth that certain of Sir David's men came at night to the complainer's byre at Gallowlees and set fire to it, burning six oxen and two kye belonging to her and her late mother. Janet and her mother having complained to the laird, could get no redress, and so were constrained to make their complaint to His Majesty. This so enraged Sir David that he threatened the old woman "in sic sort that sche within a few days thaireafter depairtit this lyfe." He also menaced the complainer, and threatened to "sett hir upoun ane hett girdle in cais sche complenit to his Majestie heirefter." "Further, at Whitsunday last he ejected her furth of hir roun of Gallowlees<sup>1</sup> and reft from her five nolt, the whole plenishing of her house, and the crop of the farm, amounting to four score bolls victual with the fodder, and so has left her nothing whereon to live." The complainer having failed to prove that part of the libel touching the burning, and the Lords finding that she had no right to the said lands, assoilzied Sir David, as the goods taken "were comprised for the debt and fermes due by her and her late mother to him for his own lands possessed by them for the time." Then follows an extraordinary sentence for assault on a minister. The Council "having considered the vyld attempt and offenses committed by Thomas Bruce against Mr. Josua Durie, minister at Forfar, in stryking of him with ane battoun, they order that on the 25th inst. he be presented at the mercat croce of Forfar with ane quhyte sark upon him, and ane paper, on his fairheid quhairson salbe

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<sup>1</sup> A small croft on the east side of the West Water, a short distance to the south of Edzell village.

writtin the caus thairfoir he is thair presentet, and that the said Thomas publictlie at the mercat croce upon his kneis ask the said minister and the hail congregation forgiveness. After which he is to be committed to ward in the said burgh, laid in the stocks and detained there till he find caution in £500, to go abroad and not to return without His Majesty's licence under pain of death. If he cannot find the said caution, the magistrates of Forfar are to keep him in ward till they get him put on board a ship to be transported furth of this realm." The last business of the Council was to charge the Earl of Argyle and others to submit their feud with the Marquis of Huntly by the 20th of May next at Stirling. The Council afterwards went to Dunfermline.

Arrangements were made for His Majesty returning to Brechin in 1603 for the purpose of suppressing signs of rebellion in Angus. A proclamation was issued on the 20th day of January, calling upon "all and sindry, erls, lordis, baronis, and landit gentlemen, valiant tuentie chalderis victual or tua thousand merkis yeirlye rent within the boundis of the Sherefdomes of Fyffe, Kinros, Perth, Forfar and Kincardin, together with the inhabitantis of the borrows within the sadis boundis," to meet His Majesty "weill bodin in feir of weir with twentie days victual and provisioun." The men of the first four named counties were to assemble in Dundee on the "nynt day of Febuair next to come." And those of "Kincardin" at Brechin on the "tent day of the said moneth" under the pain of "tinsall lyffe landis and guidis." A proclamation postponing the meeting was issued on the 31st of January. His Majesty, in consideration of "certane weghtie effearis" having taken place, prorogated the expedition to 8th March, with full purpose "preceislie to keip that dyed." The muster was again postponed in consequence of the "lait monstrous and cruell barbarite commitit be the



wicked and unhappie Clan Grigour upoun his Heynes' peicable and gude subjectis of the Lennox." The 1st of April was the next date fixed for the assembling of the forces, when the king proposed to go in "persute of that wicked and unhappie race of the Clan Grigour quhill they be alluterlie extripat and ruitit out" so that he might be "mair able to tak ordour with the rebelloun foirsaid in Angus." The death of Queen Elizabeth and the ascension of James to the English throne prevented him from keeping his appointment. The news of the Queen's death was conveyed to His Majesty at Holyrood, on the evening of Saturday, 26th March, two days after its occurrence in London. Thirty hours later the official communication of the English Privy Council was placed in his hands, and on the 6th of April he crossed the Tweed, on his way to take possession of the English throne. Although he promised to revisit Scotland once every three years at least, and oftener if occasion required, the promise was not fulfilled. Only once, and not till fourteen years after (1617), did James revisit the land of his forefathers. As already noticed, on that occasion he visited the ancient City of Brechin.

Immediately opposite the Town House is an ornamental lamp occupying the site of the *Old Market Cross*. The Cross of Brechin was first erected in 1451-52 by order of King James II., who, in a precept to the Sheriff of Forfar and his depute, commands them to pass to the "Citie of Brechyn," and on his behalf "put and erek a trone quhair thaim best likes vith sick fredomys as othir tronys ar sett vithin our borovis."<sup>1</sup> The Cross was repaired in 1679, and about half a century later it had fallen into such a ruinous state that the Council directed it to be rebuilt "for the good utility and profit of the inhabitants, and for the

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<sup>1</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. ii., p. 315.

accommodation of the country people, merchants, and traffickers." The cost of the new erection was considerable. The material alone cost £120 Scots, exclusive of the carriage, which was 6s. 8d. Scots per load, subject to the condition that there had to be at least three stones upon each cart, except when they were "extra big." The workmen received 700 merks for their labour, "besides a crown of earnest." A little over thirty years saw its removal, it being pulled down on the score of economy, and the material used in the erection of the new wells for distributing the water brought into the town from the Dove Wells at Cookston.<sup>1</sup> These wells have also all been removed, and no fragment of the "Mercat Cross" now remains.

Turning down the High Street, we pass on the right the shop of Messrs. Black & Johnston, booksellers and printers, established in 1817 by Mr. Alexander Black, who was the first to introduce printing into Brechin in 1829. Many of the works printed by Mr. Black are now rare and eagerly sought after by antiquaries and book-hunters. A complete list would be a valuable addition to Scottish bibliography. A little further down the street, on the same side, is the Bishop's Close. Passing through the low, narrow entrance, we see on the left the mouldering ruins of what had once been a handsome archway, supposed to have formed the entrance to the bishop's palace. Previous to 1566, the Bishop of Brechin resided at Farnell Castle, which, up till that date, belonged to the See.<sup>2</sup> Passing on the left the manse of the first minister of the parish, we come in sight of the Cathedral, now used as the Parish Church. It still retains much of its ancient grandeur, although sadly marred and disfigured by modern

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<sup>1</sup> *History of Brechin*, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Carnegies*, vol. i., p. xlvi.

alterations. Passing within the iron gate which guards the entrance to the dwelling of the dead, we reach the chancel, now in ruins—its graceful windows still shewing much of their original beauty. Their fine Gothic arches are supported by slender, chaste columns, with richly carved capitals, fast crumbling into decay. The dark green ivy clings to its tottering walls, as if endeavouring to hide the rents which neglect and time have made in them, or to shield them from further ravages. Proceeding along the north wall of the Church, which is of modern construction, we come to the tower, a massive structure standing at the north-west angle, proudly rearing its battlemented top to the height of seventy feet, surrounded by a bartizan, out of which rises a finely proportioned octagon spire, fifty-eight feet high. At the north corner is a slender octagon tower, inside of which is a circular stair of one hundred and eleven steps, from the top of which there is access to the bartizan. On one side of the west dial of the clock is the figure of a head cut in relief; on the other the date 1647. The date probably refers to the building of the parapet wall. In the west end of the Church is the main entrance. Surmounting the doorway is a deep Gothic arch of richly carved mouldings, supported on twenty-two elegant pillars, with fine carved capitals, all very much decayed and broken. Over the door is a large handsome Gothic window, of the decorated style—a style which was introduced about 1272, and was prevalent for about a century.<sup>1</sup> This window is not of the same age as the doorway, and had probably been the gift of some of the early bishops. Whatever age the tracery is, there can be no doubt that it has been placed in its present position after the tower was built—probably

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<sup>1</sup> Terms in Architecture in *Imp. Lexicon*, vol. i., p. 36.

in 1748, when there was a sum of £753 Scots expended on repairs.<sup>1</sup>

As already stated, the Cathedral was built by David I. about the middle of the twelfth century, and was originally in the form of a cross, in which shape it was allowed to remain up till 1806, when, not being considered well adapted for the Presbyterian form of worship, the transepts were removed, and the present unsightly aisles built considerably wider than the original, the roofs carried up under the eaves of the nave, covering up its fine carved cornice and the neat lancet windows which gave light to the interior. At the south-east angle of the Church is the Round Tower, regarding which the wildest theories of antiquarian speculation have been framed to account for its origin and purpose. Its erection has been ascribed to the Phœnicians, Picts, Danes, and Scots; and the dates given range from the first to the thirteenth century. The building is of irregular courses of stone, many of them of large size, and several tons in weight. It measures eighty-six feet nine inches from the ground to the top of the cornice, the stone roof (which is of modern construction) eighteen feet nine inches, and the stone final twelve and a half inches, making the full height one hundred and six feet six and a half inches. The entrance is by a narrow doorway on the west side, formed by four large stones the full depth or thickness of the wall; the top of the jambs incline towards each other, and at the spring or commencement of the arch it measures twenty-one inches wide. In the centre of the arch is a representation of the Crucifixion cut in relief, on each side of which is an oblong panel evidently intended for sculpture. In the middle of the jambs, on each side, is the figure of a man, habited as an ecclesiastic, holding a pastoral staff.

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<sup>1</sup> *History of Brechin*, p. 157.



The figure on the left also holds something resembling a book. At each end of the sill (which is six feet from the ground) is the figure of a curious beast in a crouching position with huge claws. The one on the left has a trunk resembling that of a elephant; the head and shoulders of the other have much the appearance of a horse. These animals are not unlike some of the figures on the ancient sculptured stones which are to be found scattered all over the country. In the middle of the sill is a lozenge very much effaced. The figures on it are barely visible, but appear to have been four trefoil ornaments pointing outward. A double row of small pellets between narrow fillets run round the doorway. The external diameter of the tower at the bottom, including the base, which projects four inches from the face, is fifteen feet nine inches, and the walls are nearly four feet thick. It tapers towards the top, where the diameter is thirteen feet, and the walls two feet ten inches. Near the top are four small openings facing the cardinal points, and in the body of the tower are other two, which give light to the interior. The interior is divided into seven stories of unequal height, formed by floors (which occupy about half the space of the area) supported on abutments projecting from the wall. As already noticed, the roof is of more recent construction than the tower itself, and was probably built between 1354 and 1384, between which dates "Hendry de Lichton, Vicar of Lethnot, gave Patrick, Bishop of Brechin, a horse and cart to lead stones to the building of the belfry of the Church of Brechin." The small bells now in the steeple were originally hung in the tower, and only removed after the alteration of the Church in 1806.

Amid the many conflicting opinions as to the origin and use of the Round Tower of Brechin we may be permitted to affirm that, if the sculptures on the doorway are of the same date as the building itself,—and there seems no

reason to doubt that they are so,—it was erected for some religious purpose, and it is not improbable that it was built at or about the time Kenneth gave the great City of Brechin to the Lord in 976. The Round Tower very nearly shared the fate of the Cross in the beginning of the century. A proposition was made by one of the architects (consulted about the alteration to the Church) to take down the tower and the chancel and use the material in the new work. Lord Panmure indignantly rejected the proposal, and threatened to hang from its top the first individual who attempted to remove a single stone of it.

Entering the Cathedral we find ourselves in a cold-looking building with bare plastered walls and deep, time-worn pews, in which the worshippers nearly disappear from view. The nave is one hundred and fourteen feet long by fifty-eight broad, the roof being supported by a row of pillars and lofty Gothic arches on each side. Part of the gallery in the east end is occupied by a handsome organ, erected at a cost of about £1200, and opened by Sir Herbert Oakley in presence of a large assemblage on the 25th of April 1878. The Church was dedicated to the Holy Trinity. During the Romish period there were twenty-three bishops of the See, many of them men of great eminence and learning.

The 1st Bishop of Brechin is known under the letter T. He was in possession of the See in 1155-56.

2nd. Sampson, 1158.

3rd. Turpin, 1178.

4th. Ralfh, 1198.

5th. Hugh, about 1214.

6th. Gregory, who was previously archdeacon, 1218.

7th. Albinus, formerly precentor of the Cathedral, was chosen by the Chapter about 1247. His consecration was ordered by Pope Innocent IV.

8th. William, 1269.



9th. William, 1286.

10th. John de Kininmunth, 1304.

11th. Adam de Moravia, 1328.

12th. Philip, 1350.

13th. Patrick de Locrys, 1354. He was Chancellor of Scotland from 1358 to 1368.

14th. Stephen, 1384. Bishop Stephen erected the Church of Lethnot into a prebend of the Cathedral at the request of Lindsay of Glenesk.

15th. Walter Forester, 1401, formerly Canon of Aberdeen, and "Secretary to the King." He assisted at a provincial Synod and Council general of the clergy of the kingdom held at Perth in 1420.

16th. John de Crannoch, 1429. John, Bishop of Brechin, was sent on several occasions Embassy to France for James I. On one of these occasions, while on his homeward voyage, he made a vow to give two silver candlesticks to the Cathedral; in fulfilment of which he delivered to the treasurer six silver cups in a case of red leather. Bishop John would appear not to have been on the best of terms with his Chapter at all times. In 1448 Gilbert Forester, archdeacon, was threatened with excommunication in a full meeting of the Chapter for having laid violent hands upon his lordship. At the same meeting John Lychtoun, dean, was solemnly admonished to remove from his house his concubine, and to abstain from all cohabitation or suspect conversation with her under pain of £40 Scots.

17th. George Schoriswod, 1454, was Chancellor of the Kingdom, and a great favourite with James II.

18th. Patrick Graham, 1463, was son of Sir William Graham of Kincardine and Mary Stewart, daughter of King Robert III. He was translated to St. Andrews in 1466, and became the first archbishop of that See. Having become deeply involved in debt, he, after a chequered

career of thirteen years, died in a state of insanity in Lochleven Castle, where he was imprisoned.<sup>1</sup>

19th. John Balfour, 1465. This bishop, by a dispensation from the Pope, held, along with his bishopric, the Parish Church of Conveth (Laurencekirk).

20th. William Meldrum, 1488.

21st. John Heburn, 1523.

22nd. Donald Campbell, 1558, better known as Abbot of Coupar. He was for some time Lord Privy Seal. It is said he never assumed the title of bishop.

23rd. John Sinclair, 1563, was appointed to the See by Queen Mary, and is said to have been one of those who advised her to adopt extreme measures against the Reformers. He died on the 9th of April 1566, "betuix thre and foure houris in the morning in James Mosman's hous in Frosteris Wynd within Edinburgh."<sup>2</sup>

The Post-Reformation Bishops in the Brechin Register are quoted chiefly from *Keith*, and are with one exception the same as given in the *History of Brechin*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *History of St. Andrews*, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> This Catalogue is taken from the *Registrum Episcopatus Brechinensis*, and is somewhat different from that given by D. D. Black in his *History of Brechin*. Mr. Black, who quotes *Keith* and *The Panmure MS.*, makes the number twenty-eight. He places Gilbert, 1247, and Robert, 1249, as 7th and 8th bishops. Gilbert would thus come in between Grigory and Albinus, and Robert between William 9th and William 10th; Edward, 1275, and Robert, 1284, after Walter Forester; G, 1424, of which he says, "Dominus G is Bishop of Brechin in the year 1424, but what name this initial letter stands for I do not pretend to say," *Keith*, p. 163. "There is no trace of any such bishop amongst the papers belonging to the Burgh of Brechin, nor does *The Panmure MS.* notice him."

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Sydserf, 4th Bishop in the Brechin Register, is omitted by *Keith*, nor does Mr. Black notice him in the *History of Brechin*. As will be seen from the dates he had only held the See for a few months.

1st. Alexander Campbell, 1566, son of the Laird of Ardkinlass. He was appointed to the See when a mere boy by the influence of his kinsman, the Earl of Argyle, with power of "giving and disposing of all the benefices which previously were in the bishop's gift." The boy bishop was not long in making use of the power with which he was vested; his first act was to alienate the lands of Farnell which he gifted to his patron and chief, Archibald, Fifth Earl of Argyle. During forty years which he held the See he alienated so much of the Church lands that his successors were reduced almost to poverty.

2nd. Andrew Lamb, 1607, was one of the three bishops who went by the king's order into England, where he received Episcopal consecration, 20th October 1610. A board in the session-house records that Andrew, Bishop of Brechin, gifted the "Hearse" before the pulpit (a brass chandelier of beautiful workmanship). Previous to his elevation to the See of Brechin, Andrew Lamb was minister at Burntisland. He was one of the ministers who commended Sir David Carnegie of Kinnaird to James VI. in 1606 for the active part he acted on behalf of the king in the questions raised between him and the Presbyterian clergymen.<sup>1</sup> Bishop Lamb was translated to Galloway in 1619.

3rd. David Lindsay, 1619, was a nephew of the Laird of Edzell. Bishop Lindsay was translated to Edinburgh in 1634, where he was very nearly killed by the infuriated mob on the 23rd of July 1637, when Jenny Geddis threw her stool at Dean Hannys' head in St. Giles' Church.

4th. Thomas Sydserf, 1635. Afterwards better known as Bishop of Galloway and Bishop of Orkney.

5th. Walter Whitford, 1635, was previously Rector of Moffat. "He was reckoned a forward man for the *Liturgy*

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Carnegies*, vol. i., p. 74.

*and Book of Canons.*" Before proceeding to read the book, in the interest of his king and order, he armed himself, his wife, and servants with pistols, and after locking the doors of the Church read the service, for which he had to fly into England to escape from the fury of the people. He was excommunicated by the General Assembly of Glasgow in 1638, but was shortly afterwards presented by the king to the living of Waldgrave in Northamptonshire.

6th. David Strachan, 1662, was descended from the ancient family of Strachan of Thornton. He was sometime parson of Fettercairn, where he got into favour with the Earl of Middleton, by whose interest he was promoted to the See of Brechin. He died in 1617, and was buried in front of the pulpit, which then stood in the east end of the Church. The board in the session-house, already referred to, records that David, Bishop of Brechin, gifted the "Orlounge" (clock) in the steeple.

7th. Robert Laurie, 1671, was previously Dean of Edinburgh. "A man of graceful person, and a popular preacher."

8th. George Haliburton, 1678, was previously minister at Cupar Angus. After holding the See of Brechin for about four years he "was translated to Aberdeen in 1682.

9th. Robert Douglas, 1682, "a lineal branch of Douglas of Glenbervy," was minister first at Laurencekirk. Before his elevation to the See of Brechin, he was Dean of Glasgow. He was translated to Dunblane in 1684.

10th. Alexander Cairncross, 1685. This remarkable man was for a number of years a dyer in the Cannongate of Edinburgh. "He was Bishop of Brechin for only a few months, having been translated to Glasgow in December 1684. After the Revolution he was made Bishop of Raphoe by King William, and held the bishopric from 1693 to 1701, the only instance of such promotion after the abolition of Episcopacy in Scotland."



11th. James Drummond, 1684, was the last bishop connected with the Cathedral. He was deprived at the Revolution (1688) with the rest of his brethren, after which he lived for the most part with the Earl of Errol, in whose house he died in 1695, aged 66 years. The constitution of the Chapter cannot be better described than in the words of Bishop Patrick in 1372. "We find," says that prelet, "that there are eleven benefices of old erected into canonaries in the Cathedral, of which four are dignities, namely, those of the dean, precentor, chancellor, and treasurer; the fifth the office of the archdeacon<sup>1</sup>—all five are compatible with other benefices. The other six benefices, those namely of the vicar, the pensioner, the sub-dean, with the prebends of Kilmoir, Butirgill, and Guthrie, we find to be simple prebends, and compatible with any other benefice, even with cure; and it is expressly declared that albeit two of the prebendaries of the latter class are commonly named vicar and sub-dean, yet they have no cure, nor prerogative of dignity, nor office, nor administration within the Cathedral nor without. Soon after the endowment of another prebend with the Church of Lethnot made the number of canons twelve."

The Alterages were also numerous, including those of St. Thomas, St. Katherine, Our Lady, St. Michael, St. Ninian, St. Cyrus, St. Magdalene, etc.; the latter two were united in 1457.

The annual revenue or income of the bishopric given in by Bishop Drummond in 1689 amounted to £941, 13s. 4d. Scots, and 293 bolls, 3 firlots victual. Of this sum the Minister of Brechin received 350 merks Scots money as

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<sup>1</sup> The Church of Farnell was the prebend of the dean. The precentor latterly had the Church of Stracathro for his prebend, and he archdeacon the Church of Strachan.



part of his stipend yearly.<sup>1</sup> The revenues and patronage of the Church fell to the Crown at the Revolution, and a large number of the teinds were gifted by James VI. to young men to enable them to study for the ministry.

The following is an instance.—“Grant to John Gairdin, steudent in Montrosis, for 7 years for his intertainment at the Schools, and education in Science and good letters, the teinds of the lands of Clayleck, extending yearly to 8 merks Scots, formirly belonging to the Com̃onity of the Chanonary of Brechin, with entry at Whitsunday 1599.”<sup>2</sup> In not a few instances the grants were for life. James Cockburne had a gift for life of the prebend of Kilmoir, “vackant by the decease of Johnne Cockburne the last prebendary, in order that the said James may the better give attendance to study virtue and good letters, 1576.”<sup>3</sup>

After the deposition of Bishop Drummond, Laurence Skinner, the Episcopal incumbent, assumed his son as helper, in which position Mr. Skinner, jun., remained till the death of his father in 1691. In 1695 the first charge was declared vacant by a commission from the Presbytery of Dundee, but no appointment was made. Mr. Skinner was allowed to remain for other two years, when the charge possessed by him was also declared vacant, and the Church remained without a minister till 1703. In that year “Mr. John Willison was solemnly set apart, consecrate and ordained to be the first minister of Brechin.” In the same year Mr. Skinner took forcible possession of the pulpit, and continued to officiate until he was declared by the Presbytery “to be an intruder and to have no relation to the Parish or Congregation.”<sup>4</sup> On the Rebellion of 1715 breaking out,

<sup>1</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin*, vol. ii., p. 445.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, vol. ii., p. 377.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, vol. ii., p. 336.

<sup>4</sup> *History of Brechin*, p. 119.

Mr. Skinner again took possession of the pulpit, and continued to preach for a short time in company with Mr. Gideon Guthrie, another Episcopal clergymen. For this proceeding Guthrie was called to strict account by the Presbytery, and Mr Skinner was banished out of their bounds. Mr. Willison was shortly afterwards translated to Dundee. So hostile was the feeling of the inhabitants of Brechin towards him that he found it impossible to obtain a carrier to convey his goods thither till the farmer of Kincairaig came to his assistance.<sup>1</sup>

It is not a little curious to find the Presbyterian Church (with all its zeal for purity of worship) drawing a revenue from the performance of a Popish ceremony—the ringing of bells at interments. There is an entry in the session-books of 10th November 1732, “The bells knelled to James Wood, in Leuchland, £2.”

The effect of the controversy, which ended in the Disruption of the Church in 1843, was severely felt in the Old Church, both its ministers, the Rev. Messrs. M’Cosh and Foot, along with the greater part of the congregation, left the Establishment. For some time after the pews during divine service were all but empty, but that state of things has passed away, and the once empty pews are again filled each Sabbath with devout worshippers. The Cathedral was originally without fixed seats, each worshipper furnishing his or her own stool or desk, which they not infrequently carried along with them to and from the place of worship. This practice causing a good deal of confusion was put a stop to by intimation from the pulpit about the beginning of the last century, that those who took away their chairs out of the Church should lose their ground right. Shortly after application

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Willison was the author of several works, the best known being the *Afflicted Man’s Companion*, and *Mother’s Catechism*.

was made for liberty to "fix seats in the empty places in the Church."

There is a disposition by John Mortimer to Robert Arbuthnot of Findowrie in 1629, "of his seat and desk in the Kirk of Brechine, which sometime pertained to Symers of Balzeordie, with the ground where on it stands."<sup>1</sup> The interior of the Church was used as a place of sepulture, £20 being charged for each interment in the nave, and £10 in the aisles.

The ground floor of the tower is used as the session-house, the groined roof of which is well worthy of inspection. From the top of this tower a fine view of the town and surrounding country is obtained.

In the wall of the south aisle is a marble tablet to the memory of Mr. Blair, already mentioned in connection with the rebellion of 1745. Shortly after his induction to the Church of Brechin he established a Sabbath School, the first of its kind in Scotland.

Leaving the church by the east door we find ourselves amid the mansions of the dead. To those who have time to spare, a leisurely inspection of the monuments in the old churchyard will afford a mournful pleasure, and particularly if they have a taste for such a contemplation. The literature of the tombstones presents lessons so pathetic and touching, that they more readily find an echo in the human breast than the teaching of any other school.

Placed against the walls of the chancel are two stone coffins<sup>2</sup> and a number of quaint old stones, all more or less defaced and broken. The oldest stone is close by the church

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<sup>1</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. ii., p. 297.

<sup>2</sup> It is not improbable that one of these had been the tomb of Bishop Strachan, who, as already noticed, was buried in front of the pulpit, which then stood in the east end of the Church, near the spot where these coffins were discovered.

door. It is curiously carved, and is believed to be a fragment of a sarcophagus which had covered the tomb of one of the Culdee Abbots of Brechin.<sup>1</sup> After its discovery, nearly three hundred years ago, it was used as a gravestone. On the side next the wall are the remains of an inscription, cut in characters of the sixteenth or seventeenth century, "fearid God and escheved ill and depairted." The oldest date on any of these stones is 1608. The inscription is almost effaced, but appears to have been in memory of a Christian who filled some office in the Brechin Kirk for nineteen years. The next oldest date is 1619, on a stone erected to the Memory of Joannes Winram. On the end of the south wall is a stone which, previous to the alterations of the Church, was over the door of the Bishop's Porch.<sup>2</sup> The armorial bearings upon it are almost effaced, except the second quarter, in which the lion rampart is still plainly visible. . Opposite the chancel is a heavy looking mausoleum, belonging to Speid of Ardovy, with the date 1519 over the entrance. In the east section of the graveyard are a large number of monuments. The Rev. Nathanael Morrin, author of *The Annals of the Church of Scotland*, 1739-66, the Rev. Alex. Leith Rose Foote, D.D., author of *The Aspects of Christianity*, and other works, and the

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<sup>1</sup> A fine drawing of this stone is given in the *Ancient Sculptured Stones of Angus*, by the late Patrick Chalmers of Albar. It is also the subject of one of the illustrations in the second edition of the *History of Brechin*.

<sup>2</sup> When the Cathedral was altered in 1806 this stone was removed from its place over the door of the Bishop's Porch and built into the wall of the Churchyard over the west gate. That portion of the wall being renewed a few years ago, it was removed and placed in its present position. Mr. Jervise in his *Memorials of Angus and Mearns* gives the armorial bearing as those of Bishop Shoriswood—"1 and 4, three lions faces, 2 and 3 lion rampant crest, probably a wreath of thorns."



Rev. George Alexander, rector of the grammar school, have monuments placed against the north wall. Rev. James Goodwin and Alexander Laing (author of *Wayside Flowers*), are interred in the enclosed space in the angle. The following by Mr. Laing is carved on his own tombstone,—

“The footstep of time hastens on in its power,  
And soon we must fall like the wayside flower ;  
But again we shall blossom in beauty and power,  
Where the foot never falls on the wayside flower.”

Near the poet's grave is a monument to the memory of the Rev. Andrew Halket, for twenty-seven years minister of the first charge of Brechin. In the south section we come upon a stone to the memory of John Mollison, with the date 1764. John Mollison was elected a member of the Town Council in 1728, made provost in 1747, and continued chief magistrate till his death ; after which his son, John Mollison, was raised to the civic chair, and remained provost till 1788. Father and son having thus been first magistrate of the Ancient City for the long period of forty-one years. Near the Round Tower is a fine monument erected by Colvin Smith, R.S.A., to the memory of his parents. Mr. Smith was an eminent portrait painter, several of his works now adorn the walls of the Mechanics' Hall. An old stone in this section has the cheering line,—

“No mortal woe can reach the lonely sleeper here.”

On the south pillar of the west gate is an inscription relating to the plague of 1647,—

“Luna quater crescens  
Sexcentos peste peremptos  
Disce mori vidit  
Pluvis et umbra sumus.”

Built into the opposite pillar is a curiously carved stone of the same date. “Here lyes Bessie Watt, spoves to David



Donaldson, Bailzie of Brechin, and Elspet Donaldson and Jean Donaldson their dochters." These three ladies had doubtless fallen victims to the plague. Bailie Donaldson was probably the father of David Donaldson, junr., who in the first record of Town Council is Bishop's Bailie. He continued a member of Council till 1683. A John Donaldson was a member of Council in 1705, after which the name disappears from the records. Near the west gate is a fine granite obelisk, erected by the people over the grave of the first Lord Panmure. The monument bears a neat inscription and his lordship's motto, "live and let live." In the narrow enclosure between the two gates, on the east side, rests the remains of D. D. Black, author of the *History of Brechin*, a work to which we have been very much indebted in compiling these pages. As yet no monument marks his grave save a mournful yew, whose drooping branches cast a dark shadow over his last resting place. Mr. Black was for a long period Town Clerk of Brechin.

Having thus reached the gate by which we entered, we pass out, and on emerging from the Bishop's Close regain the High Street. Nearly opposite the Close is a modern building, belonging to the United Co-operative Association, occupying the site of the old Episcopal Chapel. After the defeat of the Clans at Culloden very harsh measures were adopted against the Episcopalians; their property was placed at the mercy of the soldiery and many of their chapels burned to the ground. A party of Cumberland's soldiers when passing through the city attacked the Episcopal Chapel, tore up the benches and burned them, along with all the Prayer-Books found within the building. The building itself was also about to be committed to the flames when one of the ministers of the Cathedral "requested that it might be spared as it could be used for the Wednesday sermon." Never having been used for that purpose, it was transferred to the Relief Congregation in 1827. It was

latterly converted into a U.P. Church, but becoming too small for the congregation, they erected a new place of worship and sold the Chapel to the present proprietors, who had it taken down to make way for the present building. Passing along the High Street, we notice on the right the Little Mill Stairs. The Little Mill of Brechin belonged to the bishop in 1446. In a letter of that date from "Patrick Niholsone, perpetual chaiplene of Caldham," to "Syme Clerk," his tenant in the lands of Chaldhame, it is stated that the possessor and tenant of these lands "aw of law and uiss" to the Bishop of Brechin. "Aw mowtir and mowtir schaff to ye litil myl of Brechine." They were also under the obligation of keeping the mill-house in repair, to "red ye dame," and to "mak careage for ye bryngyng hayme of ye mylstane quhen it hapnis to neide to ye said myle."<sup>1</sup> At the lower end of the High Street is the South Port. No vestige of the wall which surrounded the town now remains. The Ports were pulled down in 1795 and the material sold, the Town Council having apparently come to the conclusion that there was little chance of the town being attacked by a foreign foe. On the left is the City Road (Backsides); on the right Bridge Street (Pathe Wynde); in front Union Street (Cadger Wynde). At the junction of Union Street and Southesk Street are Den Burn Linen Works, belonging to the firm of D. & R. Duke, containing nearly 600 looms, and giving employment to over 700 workers. The weekly production of linen is about 140,000 yards. The introduction of the power-loom into Brechin has entirely revolutionised the weaving trade. Thirty years ago the lower flat of most of the houses was occupied as a weaving shop, where the

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<sup>1</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. i., p. 106. The mill dam stood near the middle of Damacre Road, and was supplied with water from the Den Burn.

“click clack” of the shuttle was heard from morning till night, and where Parliamentary and municipal reforms were discussed in a manner before which the debates of our modern political clubs sink into insignificance. Some idea of the long working hours of the handloom weavers may be gathered from the following inscription which was affixed to the dial of a wooden clock, made by an ingenious weaver, and hung up in his workshop :—

“Here I wag through dust and damp,  
 A clock perhaps of such odd stamp  
     Was never seen in motion.  
 Through thick and thin I make my way,  
 Measuring out a weaver’s day  
     Of fourteen hours duration.”<sup>1</sup>

The whole of the linen manufactured in Brechin about the beginning of the century amounted to a little over 523,000 yards, considerably less than the quantity manufactured in Den Burn Works alone in one month. Further up Southesk Street are the works of Messrs. Lamb & Scott (Caldhame Works), also for the manufacture of linen, and containing about 500 looms.

We now enter Montrose Street (Upper Tenements). The first opening on the right is Witchden Road, turning into which we notice on the right the Gas Works, occupying the site on which the unfortunate victims of a blinded superstition were committed to the flames for the imaginary crime of witchcraft. Such executions were far from being uncommon during the seventeenth century, the ministers of that period being frequently unable to hold divine service in consequence of their having to attend either the trial or the burning of a witch. An old woman of the name of Marion Marnow was burned for a witch here in 1619; and

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<sup>1</sup> This curiosity is still to be seen in the workshop of the maker’s son, Mr. Fyfe, cooper, Bishop’s Close.

about thirty years later another insane creature named Janet Couper suffered the same fate. Janet was observed to kiss a dog one day while passing along the Bridge of Brechin, and on being examined, admitted that the animal was no other than the Arch Fiend, whose acquaintance she had made some years previous. She is believed to have been the last witch executed in Brechin.<sup>1</sup> As already noticed, the instrument by which they were fastened to the stake is to be seen in the town house.<sup>2</sup>

On the top of the rising ground on the left we notice the Tenements' Schools, erected and chiefly endowed by Mr. John Smith of Andover, Massachusetts, America. The designs were prepared by Mr. John Henderson, architect, Edinburgh, and, with the exception of the Mechanics' Hall (also designed by the same architect), is one of the finest specimens of modern architecture in Brechin. The foundation stone was laid with masonic honours in 1859, and the management vested in trustees, who, shortly after the passing of the Education Act, handed the buildings over to the School Board. The school has been enlarged at various times, and has now accommodation for over 600 scholars.

Opposite the lower end of Witchden Road is the Paper Mill and the Inch Bleachfield, giving employment to about 300 workers. The buildings (which belong to the town) formerly consisted of a wash mill for cleaning yarns and a meal mill—these were let together in 1807 for nineteen years at an annual rent of £181. The manufacture of paper was commenced by Messrs. Oswald, Guthrie, & Craig in 1852. The firm made extensive

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<sup>1</sup> Lecture on Witchcraft by Mr. Man, schoolmaster, late of Aldbar.

<sup>2</sup> While in course of making some excavations, previous to the erection of the gas works, a quantity of ashes mixed with human bones was discovered, along with a piece of iron chain, which had in all probability been used to bind the victims to the stake.



additions to the buildings and fitted up machinery capable of producing about 4,000,000 yards of paper annually. On the termination of the company's lease a few years ago, the premises were exposed by auction and let at an annual rent of £800. The present firm have greatly extended the works, which now produce about 9,000,000 yards of paper yearly.

Leaving the Paper Mill, we pass along River Street (Lower Tenements). On the left is Valley Linen Works (J. & J. Smart), containing about 300 looms. The first power loom in Brechin was started in Valley Works about 1853. The firm were also the first to adopt the electric light. Great improvements have been effected in River Street within the last ten years. A number of old houses which stood close to the water's edge below the ford mouth was removed, and the present protection wall built, mainly from funds left to the Town Council by the late Rev. George Alexander, rector of the Grammar School. The neat iron railing which surmounts the wall was the gift of ex-Provost Duncan.

At the lower end of River Street and forming the south entrance to the city is the Bridge, believed to be one of the oldest in Scotland. The date of its erection is unknown, but it occupied its present position as early as the thirteenth century when a payment was made for its support out of the rents of Drumsleed, in the Mearns.<sup>1</sup> It appears to have been frequently in need of repairs. A license was granted by the Convention of Royal Burghs in 1594 to the Burgh of "Brechein" for uplifting an impost at "thair brig of South Esk watter for repaying the decayet places thair of." Four pennies Scots was charged for every horseload of goods, and "ilk futeman haiffand ane burding of merchandise" paid "twa pennies." This impost continued for



three years. Licenses for a similar tax was granted in 1613, and continued for seven years. The Bridge underwent considerable repairs in 1648 at the expense of the different parishes of the Diocese of Brechin. In 1786 a sum of £350 was expended upon it, a new arch built, and the roadway made considerably wider. Part of the south arch appears to belong to the original structure, its shape is a very flat gothic—a style not very common in bridges. We can only remember having seen one similar, that of the “Brig of Balgownie” over the River Don at Aberdeen, built by Henry Cheyne, Bishop of Old Aberdeen, in 1290. From the Bridge we obtain a fine view of Brechin Castle perched on the summit of a high rock overhanging the water. And

“The finest view of Brechin may be got  
From the soft rising ground beyond the bridge,  
Where you may see the country every spot,  
And the town rising up a sudden ridge;  
The Castle, old Cathedral, and what not,  
And the spire’s griffin minished to a midge.”

A Baron Court of the lands belonging to the York Buildings Company was held at the Bridgend of Brechin in 1729, William Gairden, writer in Edinburgh and factor to the Company, presiding. From the evidence taken it would appear that the position of farmers and crofters was not unlike to what it is at present, as witness the following:—“Compear Alexander Mather, in Leuchland, who judicially acknowledged his arrears due by him to the York Buildings Company, to be conform to the accounts thereof taken up by the foresaid William Gairden, in virtue of the terms of his commission. Likeas the said Alexander Mather solemnly declared upon his honest word that his circumstances were such that he could not keep his tack and possession plenished in time coming and pay any part of said arrears.” A large number of the tenants made similar

statements. James Wood declared he was only able to pay £100 Scots, besides assigning a claim for £300 Scots for building the Mill of Farnell, which he had against the tenant. The houses and farm buildings on the Company's estates would appear to have been mere hovels. The "Burleymen" appointed to value the holdings report that the value of the "bigging on the lands possessed by James Wood was £58, 1s. 8d. Scots." George Eaton was a little better housed, the value of his buildings being £67, 8s. 4d. Scots; while Alexander Mather's was only worth £42, 10s. Scots. Some idea of the value of cattle may be had from the following entries in a memorandum book belonging to the above James Wood,—“May the 18. Bought at the Trinity Fair, Brechin, two Oxen, £3, 6s. 4d.; one Cow, at £1, 5s.”

Turning to the left and following the route taken by Cumberland's soldiers, we notice Bridgend House,<sup>1</sup> and on the right the East Mills where a large trade is carried on in the spinning and bleaching of yarns, giving employment to about 800 workers. About the beginning of the present century the buildings consisted of a mill for grinding corn and another for cleaning flax. The first firm of manufacturers was Smith & Wilson, who as was usual at the period issued a quantity of half-pence,—on one side they have a representation of the mill, a small building of two stories, with a water wheel at one end; on the other side is a view of the west end of the Cathedral and Round Tower. “Brechin Bawbees” are now rarely to be met with. Several ancient graves were discovered a little to the east of the mill while some excavations were being made in 1837. They were of the class common in this country consisting of five stones, four forming the sides and ends, and the fifth

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<sup>1</sup> General Outram resided at Bridgend House for some time after the suppression of the Indian Mutiny.

covering the top. A number of beads of a black hard substance was found inside. Turning up the "Millie Brae" we again reach Montrose Street, and proceeding east we pass Poet's Lane on the left, so named from being the residence of the author of *Wayside Flowers*. At the east end of Montrose Street we turn up Pitforthie Loan, and passing under the railway bridge notice Drumachlie on the right, and Pitforthie on the high ground in front. The celebrated Mr. W. Guthrie, of Fenwick, author of the *Christians' Great Interest*, was born at Pitforthie in 1620. He died at the early age of 35, and his remains lie interred in the south aisle of the Cathedral. Entering the town again by Park Road we notice several good villas on both sides. On the right is the Public Park partly gifted by Fox Maule, Earl of Dalhousie, and opened by him amid much rejoicing in 1867. It is tastefully laid out with walks, shrubs, and flowers, and has a neat gate, and lodge for the keeper. Near the centre is a small octagon pavilion. On the left is the Auction Mart, in which is held a weekly sale. Passing on the same side the works of the Agricultural Company, flourishing amid dust and decayed bones, we reach the Railway Station. A branch railway, four miles long, connects Brechin with the Caledonian main line at Bridge of Dun. In 1818 a survey was made of a railway between Brechin and Montrose, and in 1825 Mr. Robert Stevenson, F.R.S.E., commenced his survey of the Strathmore Railway, towards the expense of which the Town Council of Brechin subscribed ten guineas. Mr. Stevenson's report to the committee (of which the Hon. William Maule, M.P., was chairman), gives a very full account of the trade of Brechin and district. The lime kilns of Hedderwick, Pittendreich, Maisondieu, and Cairnbank, being in full operation, were estimated to use 5480 tons of coal annually, and to produce 50,000 bolls of lime. All these kilns have long ceased to be worked and are

now in ruins. Building stones from the quarries of Brechin, to be carried a distance of ten miles on the railway, were set down at 4000 tons. Coal from Montrose to the depot at Brechin 7930 tons. That article costing in Montrose 21/- to 28/-, and the carriage to the East Port of Brechin 5/4. Under the head of general merchandise, it was ascertained that there were 4874 tons conveyed through Brechin annually. The whole traffic over twenty-five miles of the railway including the towns of Montrose, Brechin, and Forfar, was estimated to yield a revenue of £9013, 15s. 11d. The passenger traffic contributing £350 of the sum. The railway was to pass through the upper end of the town near the North Port Distillery. Unfortunately the scheme was never carried out. The present railway was opened in 1846, the first train making the journey between Brechin and Bridge of Dun in twelve minutes. Previous to that time Brechin was connected with the outer world by three stage coaches running to and from Aberdeen, Dundee, and Edinburgh. The "Defiance" (of which Captain Barclay, of Urie, was frequently driver), doing the journey from Aberdeen to Edinburgh in fourteen hours. There was also a large number of carriers engaged in the goods traffic, seven going daily to and from Montrose. The inconvenience of this mode of travelling is graphically described by Mr. D. D. Black in the case of "Davidie" Walker, carrier between Brechin and Arbroath. He left Arbroath one keen frosty night about six o'clock, driving tandem fashion, with a female passenger seated on the top of his cart, and his faithful dog walking alongside. When about half the journey had been accomplished the cart stuck fast in the mud. After many fruitless attempts to remove it, the carrier unyoked one of the horses, mounted its back, telling the solitary passenger to sit still, "there's help at hand, help at hand," he proceeded to Brechin for assistance. The poor woman sat till benumbed with cold, and on resolving to leave the cart to



take a little exercise discovered that "Help" was truly at hand. The dog faithful to its charge would not allow her to leave the cart, and she was compelled to keep her seat for six hours, half-dead with cold and hunger, till David returned with a third horse to pull her out of the mire. The quantity of goods passing through the railway companies' hands at Brechin Station amounts to nearly 100,000 tons annually.

Leaving the station, we pass on the right St. Ninian's Square, a vacant space of ground where travelling showmen take up their stand when visiting the city, and on a "muckle" market-day it presents a lively scene. Immediately in front is Damacre Road, in which is situated Damacre Road School, with accommodation for about 500 pupils. At the upper end of St. Ninian's Square, on the right, are Dalhousie Street, in which are a number of neat cottages, and Infirmary Street, in which are the Brechin Infirmary, erected in 1869, and the Almshouse, built in 1878, both valuable institutions to the town. The latter has accommodation for one hundred inmates. Besides the hospital of Maisondieu, which will be afterwards referred to, James VI. in 1587 established a "Bedehouse" in Brechin, supported by part of the annual rents paid to the prebendaries and chaplains of the Cathedral prior to the Reformation, for the accommodation of the destitute and helpless of all ages, whether men, women, or children;<sup>1</sup> and in 1608 the Bailies, Council, and Master of the Hospital bought the mansion of the Chanter of Brechin to be an hospital for the poor of the said city.<sup>2</sup> The inmates of the institution had to wear

<sup>1</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. ii., p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, vol. ii., p. 236. The mansion of the Chanter stood near the west end of Church Street. In the contract of sale it is described as "lyand on the wast syid of the citie betuix the tenement and Lard off the chapelry of Nomine Jesu [Maisondieu] at the wast, the



a particular habit, and on a debauched member of the tailor craft applying for admission to the house, the Kirk Session granted his request upon condition that he "keep the houss and wear the habit suitable, and behave himself modestlie and soberlie thairin." Beggars, increasing in numbers to an alarming degree, began to congregate at the church doors on Sundays in such crowds that it was found "vnpossiable for men to open thair pursis to serve the broddis" at the church door without being attacked by them, while the collectors found it impossible to perform their duty "because of the manie beggaris that ouer hauled both them and the people."

On the occasion of King James VI.'s visit to Kinnaird in 1617, His Majesty was expected to pay a visit to the Church of Brechin, and the officer had a new "sout of blew as his livery" for the occasion, and received strict orders to "suffer neither uncouth nor couth beggairs to resort aither to the kirkyard or streitt" while the king was in the town. During this year a list of the poor of the parish was made up and a badge given to each member, whereby they might be known, only those wearing the badge being allowed to beg in the streets. This gave rise to the staff of privileged beggars who perambulated the streets on Thursdays, soliciting alms from the merchants and more opulent inhabitants down till 1845, when the first change was made in the poor law.

About 1688, in consequence of the house "being neither wind nor water tight," the inmates had to be removed and

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mansons of the Archden and Chancellor off Brechin at the eist, the comoun wennall and passag fra the kirk towards the colledg at the south, and the comoun calsay at the north." The "feu dewtie" was twenty-six shillings and eightpence Scots money. Along with the mansion of the Chanter was purchased a "wttir piece of wast zard," which formerly belonged to the Chancellor, "for onlie payment of thrie schillings four pennys Scottis monie" annually.

lodged in various parts of the town. From that time there was no hospital, properly so-called, till an almshouse was opened in 1845. It stood on the east side of City Road, and on the completion of the new building in Infirmary Street it was converted into a model lodging house.

Turning up Southesk Street, we pass along the west side of the Den Nursery, its well kept grounds filled with trees, shrubs, and flowers of endless variety and colour. These placed in narrow rows from top to bottom of its sloping sides give the den a very pleasing appearance. Towards the close of the seventeenth century the common den was set apart for the grazing of the horses and cattle of the burgesses, and an annual charge of "Forty shillings Scots" made for each animal. The whole were under the charge of the town's herd, an individual of no little consequence.<sup>1</sup> He passed along the streets every morning sounding the "nout's horn," gathering his charge as he went along, delivering them again to their respective owners in the evening. The office of town herd was abolished in 1805, and the right of pasture in the den let to the highest bidder. Eight years after Mr. John Henderson obtained a lease of the ground and converted it into a nursery. About half-way up, the den is spanned by a handsome stone bridge, forming the approach to the New Cemetery, in the centre of which stands a large Russian gun, taken at the fall of Sebastopol. It is placed on a large block of stone, bearing an inscription recording the deaths of Colonel Maule (Brother of Fox Maule, Earl of Dalhousie), and other Brechin soldiers, who fell during the Russian War. Here there are numerous monuments, but at present we can only briefly notice

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<sup>1</sup> In a return giving the state and condition of the Burgh of Brechin made to the Convention of Royal Burghs in 1692, the salary of the common sheep herd is put down at £25, 12s., the town treasurer, £13, 6s., and the town clerk, £66, 13s. 4d. Scots.

one erected to the memory of Andrew Jervise, author of *The Lands of the Lindsays, Memorials of Angus and Mearns, &c.* The monument is placed on the east side of the middle wall, and is a large block of undressed granite, with a panel sunk in one face on which is an inscription cut in quaint characters. The design of the whole, including the inscription, was prepared by Mr. Jervise himself some time before his death. By his will he left a sum of money to the Directors of the Mechanics' Institute for the purpose of providing prizes for the best essays by apprentices on improvements in their respective trades. He also left a house and garden ground in the Channonry Wynd to the Magistrates, Town Council, and Heritors of Brechin, for behoof of the Infirmary of Brechin. Mr. Jervise states that he bought this property from Lord Dalhousie for the "sole purpose of preventing any building being erected within the same that would in any way obstruct the view of the grand Round Tower and Steeple."

Leaving the Cemetery, we enter Panmure Street.<sup>1</sup> On the right is the East Free Church, the most imposing of all the modern ecclesiastical buildings in Brechin. The tower, through which is the main entrance, stands at the south end, and although somewhat peculiar in its construction has a fine appearance. It is flanked by massive buttresses, and is 140 feet high. In the north end of the church is a large Gothic window, with rich tracery and beautifully stained glass.

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<sup>1</sup> Panmure Street occupies the site of the crofts or "noul't" market, of which there is notice as early as the middle of the fifteenth century. A "Robert de Hyll" having granted an acre of land at the crofts of Brechin to the alterage of St. Katherin founded within the Cathedral. The Town Council purchasing the property in 1828 were enabled to effect several much needed improvements. They removed the site of the market to Market Street and opened two new streets—Panmure and Southesk Streets.

The first opening on the left is Bank Street, in which are situated Bank Street School, The Young Men's Christian Association and Drill Halls, and Bank Street U.P. Church. At the west end of Panmure Street, on the right, is Clerk Street. The Commercial Hotel and the Royal Bank forming the east and west angles. Clerk Street is the site of the "causey" or horse markets. On the left is City Road, in which are situated the East Established Church and City Road U.P. Church. The City Road and the High Street are connected by three narrow closes—Brakes', the Bothers', and the Black Bull or Smith's Lane. In the latter is the *Brechin Advertiser* Printing Office. The first issue of the *Advertiser* was on the 10th October 1848.

Passing along Swan Street, we notice on the right the City Hall Buildings. The old hall, which overlooks Swan Street, being too small for the town, a new hall was erected some time ago at the back of it. Externally the new building is without adornment, but the interior is tastefully fitted up, and is capable of accommodating about 1000 persons. On both sides of the street are several good shops and offices. At the west end of Swan Street, where it meets with the High Street, St. David Street, and Market Street, is the Prentice Neuk.

"Chief place of concourse Prentice Neuk, the scene  
Where beardless artizans in former times  
Were doomed to spend beneath the public gaze  
The moments brief to relaxation given."

Before the establishment of the Auction Mart, the Prentice Neuk presented an animated scene on the weekly market day, but since the commencement of the "mart" sales on Tuesdays the farmers have deserted the "Neuk," and betaken themselves to Park Road. But for the appearance of a few stalls on the High Street, there is little or no difference on a Tuesday from any other day in the week. The "muckle markets," for the engagement of farm servants,



are still held here on the first Tuesdays after Whitsunday and Martinmas ; but there is a growing feeling among all classes of society that these fairs should be discontinued, and probably at no very distant date the markets, which have for ages been held around this spot, will cease to exist. Forming the angles of Market Street with Swan Street and St. David Street are two modern buildings—the old Angus Hotel now used as offices, and the Dalhousie Hotel, built a few years ago.

Proceeding west, along St. David Street, we notice on the left the Post Office Buildings. Previous to 1882, when the present Post Office was opened, the business of this institution was conducted in a small apartment in Church Street, near the town house. Some idea of the commercial growth of the city may be gathered from the increase of its correspondence. Fifty years ago the number of letters received weekly amounted to about 150, those for Brechin Castle and Aldbar constituting a large proportion. The number now received amounts to about 13,000, nearly 150 telegrams are received weekly, and the number of postal and money orders passing through the hands of the officials is over 1000 annually. St. David Street terminates at the junction of St. Andrew Lane, Airlie Street, and St. Mary Street (the West Port). In St. Andrew Lane, the opening on the right, is the Diocesan Library, school, and dwelling-house, a neat ornamental block of buildings erected by the exertions and mainly at the expense of Bishop Forbes, whose arms and initials with the date 1853 are carved on a stone over the entrance to the library. The interior of this room is tastefully fitted up, and lighted by a large Gothic window, with armorial bearings in stained glass. On the shelves are several scarce and valuable books, many of them gifted by Bishop Abernethy Drummond, the Rev. Alex. Jamieson, Lord Forbes, and the late Bishop Forbes himself, who also left a large collection of letters, &c., relating to the



Eucharistic Controversy, in a box which was not to be opened till A.D. 1900. The remains of the Gardenstone Library, originally kept at Laurencekirk have found a resting place on its shelves ; while a large selection of Theological Works, bequeathed by Dean Nicolson, is the most recent addition to its treasures. It is particularly rich in pamphlets on the various Theological Questions that have stirred the Churches for the last century and a half. It contains such sets as the Library of the Fathers, the Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology, the Anti-Nicene Library, the Parker and Woodrow Societies, the Scottish Historians, and folio tomes of over three hundred years old. There are also several Jacobite relics and a backgammon board which belonged to Mary Queen of Scots. Opposite the library is the Roman Catholic Chapel, built in 1830, and recently purchased from the Episcopal congregation. A little further up the Lane is St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. The main entrance is through the tower (which unfortunately is unfinished) at the south-west side. In the west end is a large Gothic window, filled with stained glass, to the memory of John, 13th Earl of Dalhousie, and his Countess, Ida Louisa, subscribed for by the tenantry and others on the Brechin Castle and Edzell estates. The east window, which is also filled with stained glass representing the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Saviour, is to the memory of Mr. John Buchanan, father of Mrs. Douglas of St. Ann's, by whom the chancel has been erected as a memorial of her husband Dr. Douglas. On each side of the nave is a row of granite pillars resting on freestone bases. The capitals (from which spring lofty Gothic arches) supporting the upper portion are of the same material and are richly carved. Against the east wall of the chancel, which is laid with mosaics of beautiful design, a reredos of Caen stone, with red and green marble pillars, has been erected by his parents to the memory of Arthur Carnegie Capel of Balmamoon.

Since the Revolution there have been eleven bishops of the Episcopal See of Brechin,—

1st. John Falconer, 1709, “a good and grave man and very modest, tall, black, and stooping. He died at Ingilsmadie, July 6, 1723, and was buried at Pert.”

2nd. Robert Norie, 1724.

3rd. John Ochterlonie, 1726.

4th. James Raitt, 1742.

5th. George Innes, 1778.

6th. Dr. William Abernethy Drummond, of Hawthornden, 1787.

7th. John Strachan, 1788.

8th. George Gleig, LL.D., 1810.

9th. David Moir, D.D., 1837.

10th. Alexander Penrose Forbes, D.C.L., 1847.

11th. Hugh Willoughby Jerymn, 1875.

Turning into Maisondieu Lane, we pass along the north side of the Roman Catholic Chapel, and notice on the right Maisondieu U.P. Church. On the left is the High School, erected in 1877 at a cost of £3500. Near the east end of the Lane are the ruins of the chapel or hospital of Maisondieu, founded in 1267 by Sir William of Brechin, grandson of David, Earl of Huntingdon and Garioch. The hospital was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and supported out of the lands of “Lwichlande,” “Heychame,” “Baldougath,” “Buthyrkil,” and “Maysi,” for which the “chaplain and poor of the said house were not to pay anything, except only due and devout prayers and orisons.” The knight of Brechin reserved to himself, his heirs, and successors, the sole power of presenting the master to the house, the bishop having “the care of spiritual things only.” The chapel had also “ish and entry of a road thirty feet broad towards the town of Brechin.” There is little recorded of the hospital from its foundation till the middle of the fifteenth century, when the lordship of Brechin being annexed to the crown, James II.

granted "a deposition to George Scheres off the hospital of the blessed Virgin Marie."<sup>1</sup> Shortly after, a dispute arose between the Duke of Ross (who exercised his right of presentation in favour of Archibald Pattonson) and James Ramsay, son of Ramsay of Foxton, who claimed the office of master, "to pretene to him be presentacioun of our sourane Lord that last decest." The case was decided in favour of the Duke of Ross, who was found "undoutable patroun of the semmyn." Pattonson was declared to have the proper right to the emoluments arising from it, and Ramsay ordered to restore those he had lifted from the time of his (Pattonson's) appointment. The "King's leiges" were also warned to desist from all further persecution, "or of following of the said matter at the Court of Rome."<sup>2</sup> Pattonson's successor was Nicholas Johnston, who was master of the hospital from 1482 till 1493. William Carnegie is styled preceptor of Maisondieu in a sasine of the lands of Easter Dalgety to Sir Robert Carnegie of Kinnaird in 1549. William Rynd, who succeeded him, is styled "chaplen of the chapel of the Virgin Marie." Alexander Norrie, the next preceptor, had a gift for life of the "feu mails" of the lands of Cortachy, formerly "granted by the predecessors of the Lords of Brechin" to three chaplainaries of the choir of Brechin, and "six bairns to be sustained at the school to sing in the said choir."<sup>3</sup> During Norrie's preceptory he executed considerable repairs on the chapel at his own expense, on consideration that Sir Patrick Maule, afterwards Earl of Panmure, would "apply the fruits and rents" of the preceptory "to the maintenance of the schoolmaster of Brechin, and of the second minister there," and also "upon expectation of the said Laird of Panmure his

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<sup>1</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. ii., p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> *Memorials of Angus and Mearns*, p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. ii., p. 347.

favour." Shortly after Robert Norrie his son had a presentation to the preceptory of Maisondieu, upon condition that he and "his successors should serve the cure of an actual and ordinar minister within the chapel of the said preceptory ; and also would teach the youth of the city of Brechin in grammar ; and exercise the place and charge of an master of the Grammar School, within the samyne."<sup>1</sup> Part of the teinds of the chapelry would appear to have been at the disposal of the bishop and chapter of Brechin. In 1586 there is a grant to Robert Low, "his heirs, and assignees," of the escheat of the tack set by Alexander, Bishop of Brechin, and the chapter thereof, to James Graham his servant, and by him disposed to Laurence Dundas and Margaret Wischart, his spouse, of the teind sheaves of the twenty acres of land, with the pertinents formerly belonging to the chaplainaries of Sir William Rynd and Sir William Carnegie, chaplains of the chaplainry of St. Mary, founded within the said city, called the Maisondieu, which tack had fallen to the king in consequence of the said Laurence and his spouse having been put to the horn."<sup>2</sup> The ruins although much decayed present some fine points of early English architecture. During the early part of the present century the building was used as a stable, when it was unfortunately destroyed by fire, after which the building was allowed to crumble away, until a few years ago when an effort was made to preserve the portion still standing by filling up the rents with cement.

Previous to the Hospital of Maisondieu becoming the parent of the Grammar School, there was a college belonging to the Cathedral, founded in 1429 by Walter Stuart, Earl of Athol and of Caithness, Lord of Brechin and Cortachy. The college was supported out of the lands of Cortachy.

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<sup>1</sup> *Memorials of Angus and Mearns*, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. ii., p. 357.



Nicholas Johnston was chaplain of the college in 1482, and the first person who styles himself rector of the school of Brechin is Alexander Hog in 1485.<sup>1</sup> The college stood a little to the west of the Cathedral, near where the old grammar school (now used as a dwelling house) still stands.

Leaving Maisondieu Lane, we turn up Market Street (The Timber Market), where the Highlandmen used to take up their stand when they came to the weekly market with their timber, peats, and heather, for sale. The free masons were formerly prohibited from marching in this street by torch light, because of the danger to the low thatch roofs of the houses. At the north end of the street is the North Port Brewery and Distillery.

Turning to the left along Latch Road, the first opening on the right leads past Cookston. The lands of Cookston were purchased in 1610 by David Carnegie, grandson of Sir Robert Carnegie of Kinnaird, and remained in possession of the family till 1723, when James Carnegie sold them to John Doig, Provost of Brechin. Cookston now forms part of the estate of Murlingden. The minutes of the Town Council of 1693 record that James Carnegie, younger, of Cookston, struck Alexander Low, a burgess, broke Bailie Cowie's cart, and therewith forced open his outer gate, then his hall door, and the windows of his dwelling house, and finally fired a gun at the said bailie, and being imprisoned, broke out of the jail, armed with a cocked pistol and a drawn sword." Mr. Carnegie's differences with the authorities being peaceably adjusted, he was created an honorary burgess on the following day. Shortly after this same person was a source of trouble to Mr. Willison and his session. They deemed it necessary to cite Mr. Carnegie

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<sup>1</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. ii., p. 119. In a sasine of "the tenement called the Archdeacon's Manse" one of the witnesses (Patrick Brockhouse) is designated doctor of the grammar school.

before them for some alleged breach of discipline, but could find no one in Brechin bold enough to execute the warrant.<sup>1</sup>

Latch Road contains a number of good villas. At the west end is St. James' Park, also containing several good villas. Passing along Airlie Street, we return to the West Port and turn into St. Mary's Street, in which, facing Castle Street, is the Mechanics' Institution Buildings, the finest specimen of architecture in the city. It was erected in 1838, from designs by Mr. John Henderson, Edinburgh, and gifted to the town by the first Lord Panmure. The ground floor contains apartments for the librarian and two large handsome rooms, formerly the Grammar School. On the erection of the High School they were sold to the Directors of the Institute, and by them let to the members of the City Club. On the first floor is the hall, capable of holding about 400 persons, in which two courses of lectures are given annually during the winter months. Several fine paintings, most of them lent on trust by Lord Panmure, adorn its walls, containing, among others, portraits of Lord Panmure, Oliver Cromwell, Lord Chancellor Erskine, General Mina, Sir William Wallace, Dr. Alexander Guthrie, Dr. Foote, D. D. Black, Alexander Laing (poet), Andrew Jervise, &c. Occupying the centre of the west wall is a large picture, by Philip, of Bruce receiving the Sacrament at Bannockburn, for which Lord Panmure gave £500. Adjoining the hall is the library, well stocked with works in every department of literature. The annual subscription for members ranges from one shilling and sixpence to three shillings. Members are admitted to the lectures free. Immediately in front of the building is a very neat Fountain, erected by Lady Christian Maule to the memory of her brother, Fox Maule, Earl of Dalhousie.

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<sup>1</sup> *History of Brechin*, p. 106.

Turning east, and passing along Church Street, we notice on the left an old building of three stories, said by tradition to have been the town residence of the Earls of Crawford. A spring well in an adjoining garden was called Beardie's Well, after Earl Beardie or the "Tiger Earl." Whither Earl Beardie ever resided in the house is uncertain, but it is not improbable that it had at one time been the mansion of one of the canons of the Cathedral.<sup>1</sup> During the wars of the Covenant it was the "ludging" of the Laird of Findowrie, Robert Arbuthnot, generally known as the "Herried Laird," who was representative elder from the Presbytery of Brechin to the General Assembly. It was one of the houses which suffered in the conflagration raised by Montrose's soldiers in 1645, being previously plundered along with the "victual housses and stabillis."<sup>2</sup> During

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<sup>1</sup> The whole of Church Street and a part of Castle Street appears to have been occupied by the mansions of the canons, apart from those noticed in note 2, page 56. The archdeacon's manse is described in a sasine in 1660 as lying "betux" the churchyard at the south, the minister's yard at the west, the High Street or common causeway at the north, and the lands of James Ramsay at the east. A tenement, some time pertaining to Alexander Morris's chaplain, is described as situated in the "Nether West Wynd," and bounded by the "common calsay" on the south. The sub-deacon's manse stood in the Kirk Wynd near the west kirk gate, and the garden attached to the present parsonage appears to have belonged to the dean.

<sup>2</sup> In a statement of the losses sustained by the Laird of Findowrie and his tenants, drawn up in October 1646, it appears they had suffered by the ravages of Montrose to the extent of £11,033, 9s. 4d. Of this sum the tenants lost £3049, 0s. 8d. The lands of Findowrie had probably been ravaged about the end of July or the beginning of August, a few days before the battle of Kilsyth, the Royalist army having marched in that direction after the removal of their camp from Fordoun. The Clanranald bard relates that while there the M'Donalds ravaged the neighbouring lands, and that young Donald, while engaged in carrying of the spoil, was met by an old

recent alterations a well was discovered in the floor of one of the rooms. Adjoining this building is the Masons' Lodge, where the brethren of the mystic tie meet for the transaction of business and the initiation of members into the mysteries of their craft. The opening on the right is Church Lane, a rather steep incline leading to the Cathedral and churchyard. On the left we notice the West Free Church, a plain unadorned building, approached by a flight of broad steps. It is comfortably seated for between 700 and 800 persons, and was the first Free Church erected in Brechin. Dr. Foote, who, as already stated, left the Established Church in 1843, being its first minister. Having thus traversed most of the streets in town, we have arrived again at our starting point, the Town House, from which, after a short rest, we will retrace our steps to the Mechanics' Hall.

Going west along Castle Street, in which are several good villas, we notice on the left the east lodge and approach to Brechin Castle. Passing within the gate, we cross St. Michael's den by a handsome bridge, a short distance from which is the stables, occupying the site on which stood the Church of Kilmoir. The only ministers of this church of which we have seen any notice are John Cockburn, who, in October 1570, got a remission from King James VI. for being "art and pairt" in the surrender of the castle to the Earl of Huntly, and for securing and maintaining Captain David Wymes, James Mure, and Captain Alexander Coutts, and for taking part with Adam Gordon and others in the rebellion,<sup>1</sup> and Andrew Lechie (who is also sometimes

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man, "who told him that the Mearns had not been spoiled since Donald of the Isles spoiled it, when he fought the battle of Harlaw; and I suppose, young gentleman, said the old man, you are descended from him, if you be the captain of Clanranald."

<sup>1</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. ii., p. 333.



styled preceptor of the Grammar School).<sup>1</sup> Lechie was presented to the living in 1577, and held it till at least 1608, in which year he witnessed a gift of certain lands to the Cathedral by "James Lewingstoun of Cald-hame."<sup>2</sup> Shortly after the latter date it ceased to be a place of worship, and its revenues were gifted to the minister of the Church of Brechin by the patron, "John Livingston of Donypase." The gift was made upon a statement that the "persons dwelling formerly within the parish of Kilmoir were then within the parish of Brechin, and there received the word and sacraments."<sup>3</sup> A little to the south-east of the stables is the Castle, a strong and somewhat heavy looking edifice, standing on the verge of a perpendicular rock, about eighty feet high, overlooking the river. David, Earl of Huntingdon, shortly after receiving the Lordship of Brechin from his brother, gifted it to his son Henry, who adopted the surname of Brechin, which was afterwards borne by his descendants, in whose possession the estates remained till 1320. Sir William de Brechin, who founded Maisondieu, became one of the most powerful and influential barons of his time. He married a daughter of Alexander Comyn, Earl of Buchan, and by her had Sir David, who succeeded him. Sir David Brechin paid homage to Edward I. of England on two different occasions,<sup>4</sup> and entering his service, fought against the interests of his native country for many years. Being present at the battle of Methven, he took the Scottish patriot, Sir Simon Fraser, prisoner.<sup>5</sup> Brechin ultimately made his peace with Bruce,

<sup>1</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. ii., p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, vol. ii., p. 293.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, vol. ii., p. 296. <sup>4</sup> *Memorials of Angus and Mearns*, p. 124.

<sup>5</sup> Sir Simon Fraser was the eldest son of Alexander Fraser, Thane of Cowie, in the Mearns. He was taken prisoner by the English some time previous to 1297, but being set at liberty, he joined Wallace, and was one of the commanders in the Scottish army that defeated the English three times in one day at Roslin. At the battle

and joined him in his struggle for the independence of his country. Wallace, at the head of a powerful army, made an attack upon the Castle, and after a brief siege, took it and partly destroyed it. How long it remained in that condition is uncertain, but it was again strongly fortified and in the possession of the Scots in 1303, when Edward led a powerful army against it, and after a memorable siege of twenty-one days, again took possession of it and reduced it to ashes.<sup>1</sup> On this occasion the Castle was governed by Sir Thomas Maule, who was unfortunately struck by a missile from one of the enemy's engines on the twentieth day of the siege, and only survived the blow for a few hours. The English monarch learning that Maule was wounded offered the most favourable terms to induce him to surrender, but the brave general scorned the proposal, and spent his last breath in encouraging his devoted followers to hold out. The heroic little band obeyed his dying command until the next day, when, despairing of any relief, they lowered the drawbridge,<sup>2</sup> and threw the gates open to the enemy. The beseiging engine used on this occasion was a war wolf similar to that used at the siege of Stirling<sup>3</sup> by the same monarch some time afterwards.

of Methven he three times saved the life of his prince; but falling himself into the hands of the enemy, he was carried to London and there executed.

<sup>1</sup> In a household wardrobe account of Edward I. is the following payment, "To Gerard Dor and John de la Moille for sulphur for burning the Castle of Brechin, iiis."

<sup>2</sup> The castle had been surrounded by a fosse. The river forming the southern defence. St. Michael's Den (through which the skinner's burn still runs) had protected it on the east and north, while a deep ditch had defended the west side. Whether this ditch had been natural or artificial is unknown, nor is it certain at what period it was filled up. It appears to have been in existence in 1600, and is shewn in Captain Slezer's "View of Brechin."

<sup>3</sup> In the wardrobe account referred to there is recorded a payment

These engines are believed to have been capable of discharging stones of from two to three hundred pounds weight.<sup>1</sup> Previous to burning the Castle, Edward was careful to collect all the papers and other documents he could discover, and had them carefully packed up and removed to the English capital.<sup>2</sup> The fortress appears to have been soon again repaired, probably by Sir David Brechin, who being shortly afterwards pursued by Bruce took refuge within its walls.<sup>3</sup> Brechin, after making his peace with the Scottish monarch, became one of his most devoted followers. He was succeeded by his son, Sir David Brechin, commonly called the flower of Scottish chivalry, who, like his father, became one of the staunchest of Bruce's friends, and one of those who asserted the independence of Scotland in 1320, but being made privy to the plot of Soules against the life of the king, he was executed as a traitor only four months after he had subscribed the famous letter. The Lordship of Brechin was then granted to Sir David Barclay, husband of Margaret of Brechin, sister of the last Sir David.<sup>4</sup> Barclay, being killed at Aberdeen in 1350, was succeeded by his only son, who, dying in 1364, left an only daughter, who became the wife of Walter Stewart, Earl of Athole. Stewart accordingly succeeded to the Lordship,<sup>5</sup> but being the chief actor in the murder of James I., he was

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of £40 to one of the Queen's valets for his labour in making a war wolf for the storming of Stirling Castle wall.

<sup>1</sup> A rounded free stone, supposed to have been one of the missiles used at the siege, was discovered a few years ago in a field on the south side of the river. It had evidently been fashioned with a hammer, and weighed about two hundred pounds.

<sup>2</sup> Another entry in Edward's Wardrobe Account records a payment of 2s. 6d. for a wooden coffer for containing the charters, writings, and other memoranda found in the Castle of Brechin.

<sup>3</sup> *Memorials of Angus and Mearns*, p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

executed at Edinburgh in 1437, his titles and estates being forfeited. Sir Thomas Maule of Panmure laid claim to the Lordship in right of his mother, who was a niece of the last Barclay of Brechin. Sir Thomas was only successful in obtaining a very small portion of the estates, the greater part being annexed to the Crown. Shortly afterwards Mary, Queen of James II., had a grant of the Barony of Brechin.<sup>1</sup> In 1452 the Lordship was gifted to the Earl of Huntly, who exchanged it for the lands of Badinzoch.<sup>2</sup> The Lordship was again annexed to the Crown in 1455. Shortly afterwards Thomas, Lord Boyd, Earl of Arran, had an annuity from the lands, which was continued till 1469, when he was deprived, and the Lordship granted to the Earl of Mar. In 1472-3 Janet, Countess of Dalhousie, and David, Earl of Crawford, had each a life rent out of the Lordships of Brechin and Navar. In 1480 James, Duke of Ross, second son of James III., had a grant of the Lordship. He was made Bishop of St. Andrews in 1496 and died in 1503.<sup>3</sup> About thirty years later it was in possession of Sir Thomas Erskine, a cadet of the House of Dun,<sup>4</sup> who exchanged it with

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<sup>1</sup> *Memorials of Angus and Mearns*, p. 478.

<sup>2</sup> Gordon's *Earldom of Sutherland*.

<sup>3</sup> Spottiswoode's *History of the Church*, p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> During the month of April 1514 an inquest was held in the Court-house at Forfar before the Sheriff, regarding the smith of the common smithy of the Lordship of Brechin, which throws considerable light on the manners and customs of the times. "The inquest declared that the late Richard Lyndesay and his predecessors and progenitors, smiths of the common smithy of the Lordship of Brechin, by a good, laudable, and permitted custom, yearly uplifted and received heritably for the work of the said smithy nine firloths of good meal for each plough and mill of the husbandman of these towns underwritten, namely, Balnabrech, Kindrokat, Petpollakis, Pittendrech, Haugh of Brechin, Pettintoschall, Balbirny, with the Mills of Kinraig and Leuchland, with the pertinents and the fleece of one old sheep yearly, from each husbandman of the foresaid towns for the making of the scissors or wool shears of the foresaid



John, Fifth Earl of Mar, for the lands of Balhagardy in Aberdeenshire in 1550.<sup>1</sup> John, Fifth Earl of Mar, was governor of Stirling Castle, and had the care and tuition of the young King James V.<sup>2</sup> In 1545 he was entrusted with the care of the young Queen Mary, and had the honour of carrying her safe into France in 1548. His death occurring in 1553, he was succeeded by his son John, Sixth Earl of Mar. This earl was also in great favour at Court, and to his guardianship Queen Mary committed the care of the infant prince, afterwards James VI., and so well did he discharge his trust that, after Bothwell had married the Queen, they could not prevail with him either by threats or promises to deliver up the young king till he had solemnly set the Crown upon his head.<sup>3</sup> It was during this earl's time that the Earl of Huntly took possession of the castle "in the Queine's name and behalff" in 1570. Mar was appointed Regent on the death of Lennox, but he only enjoyed the honour for a short time, his death taking place in 1572. He was succeeded by his son John, Seventh Earl of Mar, who was in great favour with King James VI., and had the tuition of the young prince Henry committed to his care, but getting involved in the troubles of his time, he was attainted, and had his estates forfeited in 1584. He was restored the

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husbandmen, and also common pasturage for two cows and one horse, with free ish and entry to the said Haugh of Brechin, and that the said Alexander Lyndesay, son of the said Richard Lyndesay, is the lawful and nearest heir of the said deceased Richard, his father, to the said smithy and the said work, with the said privileges, profits, pertinents, and that the said work, with the said profits and pertinents, is hereditary to the said Alexander Lyndesay and his heirs for ever, and that the said Alexander shall maintain the said smithy, together with the work due therefrom and wont (to be done) to the said husbandmen for ever."

<sup>1</sup> *Memorials of Angus and Mearns*, p. 478.

<sup>2</sup> Wood's *Peerage*, vol. i., p. 206.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, vol. i., p. 208.

next year, and when James VI. went to England in 1603 Mar was one of the Scottish Lords who accompanied him.<sup>1</sup> A few months before his death (1634) he sold the Lordship of Brechin and Navar to Sir Patrick Maule of Panmure, who afterwards married Margaret Erskine, eldest daughter of the deceased earl and relict of William, Sixth Earl Marischall. Sir Patrick was zealously attached to the cause of Charles I., who in 1646, as a reward for his services, created him a peer by the title of Earl of Panmure, Lord Maule of Brechin and Navar. His lordship died in 1661, and was succeeded by his son George, Second Earl, who was greatly in favour with Charles II., and by him was appointed to the command of the Forfarshire cavalry. He had been present at the battles of Dunbar, Inverkeithing, and Worcester, but perceiving that he could be of little service to the king, submitted to General Monk in 1652.<sup>2</sup> He died in 1671, and was succeeded by his son George, Third Earl, who was a Privy Councillor to Charles II. and James VII. He died in 1686, and was succeeded by his brother James, Fourth Earl, who was one of James VII.'s staunchest supporters, and joining Mar's rebellion, he proclaimed James VIII. king at the cross of Brechin. Being present at the Battle of Sheriffmuir, he was taken prisoner, but was rescued by his brother Henry and escaped abroad. He was attainted of high treason, and had his extensive estates forfeited in 1716, and although they were twice offered to be restored to him if he would take the oaths to the House of Hanover he would not comply. He died at Paris in 1723. Earl James made extensive additions to the castle in 1711. On the estates being annexed to the Crown, Robert Stewart, Esq., ex-Provost of Glasgow, was appointed factor by the Commissioners of the forfeited estates in Scotland. He did not however long enjoy the office, the Lordship of Brechin,

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<sup>1</sup> Wood's *Peerage*, vol. i., p. 209.\*

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, vol. ii., p. 55.

among others, being sold to the York Buildings Company in 1719. After remaining in their possession for over forty years, it was purchased by William Maule, nephew of the forfeited earl. William Maule was created an Irish peer by the title of Earl of Panmure of Forth and Viscount Maule of Whitechurch. His lordship was never married, and at his death, which took place in 1782, he left his estates to his nephew George, Eighth Earl of Dalhousie, in life rent, and to William, his second son, who, on succeeding in 1787, assumed the name and arms of Maule of Panmure. He was created Lord Panmure and Baron of Brechin and Navar in 1831, and after possessing the estates for the long period of sixty-five years died in 1852. He was succeeded by his eldest son Fox, Second Lord Panmure, who was a member of the Privy Council, and held the office of Secretary of State for War from 1855 to 1858. On the death of George, Marquis of Dalhousie, in 1860, Lord Panmure succeeded to the titles and estates as Eleventh Earl of Dalhousie. During his possession of the estates he executed numerous improvements upon them. He built the handsome shooting lodge of Invermark, where he often resided, and where he was honoured with a visit from the Queen and Prince Albert, only a short time before the latter's death. He died at Brechin Castle in 1874, and was succeeded by his cousin, the Honourable George Ramsay, Twelfth Earl of Dalhousie. The Panmure titles becoming extinct, he was created a peer of Great Britain by the title of Baron Ramsay of Glenmark. He died in 1880, and was succeeded by his eldest son John, Thirteenth Earl. On the accession of this earl to the titles and estates, he at once commenced to improve the condition of the tenantry and others on his vast possessions, and during the seven years he was in possession he expended £150,000 on improvements. His free, manly, and generous character, and his unvarying efforts to promote the welfare of others are too

well known to need recounting here, while the melancholy circumstances attending his untimely death and that of his young wife are still fresh in the memory of the people. Suffice it to say that in the long line of noblemen, warriors, and statesmen, who have preceeded him in the Lordship of Brechin, none have been more truly loved in life nor more sincerely mourned in death. He died in 1887 at the early age of 47. The present earl, who is a minor, is his eldest son. Before leaving the castle grounds a run through the gardens and a visit to the Image Bridge<sup>1</sup> will amply repay the time spent.

On regaining the highway by the west gate we proceed west, and cross the river by the Stannochy Bridge (built in 1823-4), from which we obtain a fine view of Maulesden House, occupying the rising ground on the north bank of the river, built by the Hon. William Maule<sup>2</sup> (third son of the first Lord Panmure). The present proprietor is Thomas Cox, Esq.

We next notice on the left Aldbar Gate Lodge, and entering the policies, pass along the edge of a very romantic den, at the bottom of which a clear sparkling burn winds its zig-zag course, forming the boundary line between the parishes of Brechin and Aberlemno. At the upper end of the den is the Castle. The estate of Aldbar was for a long time in the possession of the family of Crawmond. Alexander de Crawmond was in possession at least before the middle of the fifteenth century. His name appears appended to several documents dated between 1447 and 1497.<sup>3</sup> "James Cravmond de Aldbar" is mentioned in a charter by John,

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<sup>1</sup> The figures which ornament the bridge, and from which it derives its name, are said to have cost £100 each.

<sup>2</sup> The Hon. William Maule succeeded to the estates of Maulesden and Fearn by his marriage with the only daughter of Captain Binnie.

<sup>3</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. ii., p. 142.



Bishop of Brechin, to "Johanne Owdny" in 1552.<sup>1</sup> This James was probably the last Crawmond of Aldbar, the estate being bought in 1577 by John, Lord Glamis, who gave it to his second son Sir Thomas Lyon, who built the castle.<sup>2</sup> The estate ultimately fell to the Earl of Kinghorn, who disposed of it to a cadet of the House of Sinclair. About 1678 Sir James Sinclair sold it to Peter Young, Esq., of Easter Seaton. On the death of the last Young of Aldbar in 1753, the estate was purchased by William Chalmers, Esq., of Hardeland. Mr. Chalmers was succeeded in 1765 by his son Patrick, who for nearly forty years held the office of Sheriff of Forfarshire, and was the last sheriff in Scotland on whose warrant a death sentence was carried into effect.<sup>3</sup> He died in 1824, and was succeeded by his son Patrick, who only lived to enjoy the estate for two years. He was succeeded by his son Patrick, who represented the Angus Burghs in Parliament from 1835 to 1842, when he was compelled to resign his seat in consequence of ill health. During his illness, which extended over a period of ten years, Mr. Chalmers found employment in the study of the charter, history, and antiquities of Forfarshire. He edited a collection of the *Sculptured Stones of Angus*, a magnificent volume, printed for private circulation. He also assisted largely in editing the *Chartulary of Arbroath* and the *Registers* of the Cathedral of Brechin. Mr. Chalmers made considerable additions to the castle. His death occurred at Rome in 1854. The present proprietor is a nephew of the deceased author.

Retracing our steps along the verge of the den, we come to the chapel, a small neat building, occupying a romantic site at its extremity. Regarding the early history of this

<sup>1</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. ii., p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, vol. i., p. xxviii.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Low, a native of Brechin, hanged on Balmashanner Hill, Forfar, for theft in 1786.

church or its rectors little is known. The name of only one of the latter has been left us—that of Nicholas Greenlaw, who witnessed the gift of forty pounds annually out of the lands of Cortachy to the Church of Brechin by Walter Stewart, Lord of Brechin. The chapel contains a large number of antique articles, including a stone font and several ancient sculptured stones.

Regaining the highway, we pass on the right the farms of Broomknowe and Netherton of Melgund. At the latter we take the road on the left and ascend Angus Hill, from the top of which a fine view is obtained of the vale below. Descending the west side, we come to the Crosstown of Aberlemno, a small hamlet, consisting of a few labourers' cottages, one of which does duty as a grocery store, and another as an inn. A little to the west of the village and close by the roadside are the "standing stanes," said by tradition to commemorate the defeat of the Danes by Malcolm II. in the beginning of the eleventh century. The stones are three in number. The largest measures about nine feet high, and has a fine specimen of a Celtic cross sculptured on one side; on the other are several figures on horseback and on foot. Near the top are two of the symbols most common to the sculptured stones, namely, the crescent and the spectacle ornament. The next stone is a rough unhewn boulder, a little over four feet in height, bearing on one face the same symbols—two figures, generally supposed to represent a comb and mirror, and a representation of a serpent. The third stone is somewhat smaller than this last, but bears no trace of sculpture or mark of any kind. Close by the door of the church, which is about a quarter of a mile distant, stands another obelisk, considerably smaller than the first stone, but of much finer sculpture, the shaft and arms of the cross being filled in with beautiful interlaced work. About the close of the last century, an old man, professing

to have been a Danish soldier, happening to pass through the hamlet, had his attention directed to these monuments by some of the inhabitants, who thought it not unlikely that he would be able to tell the meaning of the mysterious figures. After a long and careful scrutiny, with tears streaming down his weather-beaten cheeks, he disclosed their awful meaning to the wondering rustics gathered around him. The interpretation has been preserved in the following couplet,—

“ Here lies the King of Denmark’s son,  
With twenty thousand of his horse and men.”

Doubtless the interpreter had been well rewarded for his trouble. That these stones were erected to commemorate some person or persons of note or some important event connected with the district cannot be doubted, but beyond this nothing is known regarding them. Besides the defeat of the Danes, this district is said to have been the scene of several bloody engagements at a much earlier date between the Picts and the Scots—one about the year 697, in which fell “Mac Echa, M’Maldwin, and Aod, the tall king of Daleriaid ;” and another, about four miles further west, in which the Picts suffered a severe defeat about the year 836. Numerous stone coffins and other traces of sepulchre have been found in the neighbourhood. Nearly all the coffins found were of the common type, consisting of four slabs forming the sides and ends, and a fifth, generally larger, forming the top ; but about fifty years ago one was discovered about a mile to the west hewn out of a solid stone. This relic was unfortunately broken into small pieces and used for building part of a wall near by when it was discovered. A short distance to the east of the church is Flemington Castle, fast falling into ruins. Comparitively little is known regarding this building or the lands from which it takes its name. During the reign of David II. they appear to have

belonged to the crown, that monarch having granted to Sir William Dishington an annuity from the Lands of Flemington in 1366.<sup>1</sup> In 1710 the estate of Flemington was purchased by Mr. Auchterlonie, the last Episcopal minister of the parish. At Mr. Auchterlonie's death, which took place in 1742, his affairs were in such a very unsettled state that John Auchterlonie, his grandson and heir, renounced heirship to the estate. It shortly after came into the possession of Sir Alexander Ramsay, who in 1755 conveyed it to Mr. George Grahame. In the beginning of the present century the estate was in the possession of Mr. Colin Bruce, when it was the subject of a litigation between the proprietor and John Spence of Bearehill and Alexander Ritchie, Town Clerk of Brechin, representative heirs of Mr. Auchterlonie. The present proprietor is Patrick Webster, Esq.

About a mile to the east of Flemington is the magnificent ruin of Melgund Castle. The lands of Melgund were in the possession of the family of Annand as early as the close of the thirteenth century, and remained in their possession till 1542, when Jannet Annand sold them to Cardinal Beaton. The cardinal appears to have at once commenced the building of the castle, which was to be the future home of Marion Ogilvy, daughter of James I., Lord Airlie, and the mother of Beaton's family. Unlike most buildings of its kind, Melgund Castle appears to have been all built at one time and to a uniform plan, probably copied from Edzell, which it resembles in many points, being only inferior in point of size. The cardinal's arms and initials are carved on the sill of one of the windows on the south side of the tower; and Marion Ogilvy's, surmounted by a lion passant, are over one of the west windows, and on a stone under the main stair near the entrance to the great

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<sup>1</sup> *Memorials of Angus and Mearns*, p. 179.



hall. It has frequently been asserted that Beaton resided at Melgund for a short time on several occasions, but it is doubtful if the castle was inhabited at the cardinal's death, which took place not more than four years after he became possessed of the estate. Beaton settled the lands of Melgund on Marion Ogilvy and his eldest son, and they remained in possession of the family till 1630, when they were purchased by George, First Marquis of Huntly,<sup>1</sup> who in turn sold them to Harry Maule in 1635. The male line of Maule failing, the estate came into the possession of an ancestor of the present proprietor, the Earl of Minto, whose eldest son assumes the title of Lord Melgund from the lands. About three miles to the south-east of Melgund we come to Ardovie House. Previous to 1549 the lands of Ardovie formed part of the estate of Kinnaird, but in that year Sir Robert Carnegie exchanged the lands of Kuikstoun for those of Ardovie with George Speid, with whose descendents the estate has ever since remained. The present proprietor lives abroad, and the house and shootings are let to J. S. Will, Esq., M.P. for the Angus Burghs. Still proceeding south-east for about a mile, we reach Farnell Castle, one of the residences of the Bishops of Brechin previous to the Reformation. The Castle of Farnell had been a place of considerable note during the thirteenth century. Edward I. paid it a visit in 1296, and received the homage of William Fraser, Bishop of St. Andrews, and one of the Regents of the Kingdom. On the accession of Alexander Campbell to the bishopric, he gifted the lands of Farnell to his kinsman and patron the Duke of Argyle, in whose possession they

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<sup>1</sup> The only evidence of the possession of Huntly now to be seen is a stone, built into the east wall of one of the cottages on the farm of Mains of Melgund, with a beautiful monogram of the initial letters interlaced of George, Marquis of Huntly, and Henrietta Stewart his wife, daughter of the Duke of Lennox.

remained for about twelve years, during which time the castle appears to have fallen into a ruinous condition. In a report drawn up by John Meldrum, Vicar of Farnell, in 1570, he states that "the grate chalmer, the inner chalmer, the chapel, and all the other apartments, are uninhabitable." The present castle had probably been erected shortly after.<sup>1</sup> Colin, Sixth Earl of Argyle, sold the estate to James, Lord Ogilvy of Airlie, in 1578. After remaining in the possession of the Airlie family for fifty years it was sold to David, Master of Carnegie, at whose death it became part of the Southesk estate, and has remained so ever since. The castle was converted into an hospital for poor persons belonging the estate by Lady Carnegie, the present earl's grandmother, for which purpose it is still used. At a little distance from the castle is the church. In 1672 a report of the state of the church and parish of Farnell was drawn up by a committee appointed by the Presbytery of Brechin, when, after stating the number "of communicants within the parochie" at "three hundreth," it proceeds to notice the revenues of the church, and declares that "the Dean of Brechin is still in possession of the rentallit bollis of the hail parochie."<sup>2</sup> These were not the days of School Boards and compulsory officers. The report further states that there is "na schooll, nor fondatione for a schooll, nor na provision may be maid for a schooll, nor na necessitie that thair should be ane for Mr. John Weymes, Minister at Kynnaired, has gratis taught all the parochineris barnis of Kynnaired and the parochie that pleisit to resoirt to him thir many yearis by past, but fand very few willing evir to send thair children and nane thir dyvers yearis by past for as soone as they are aucht year old they imploy thame all as hirdis in keipping thair schiepe and nolt." Some years ago a beautiful Celtic cross having two figures,

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Carnegies.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

representing our first parents in the garden, was found near the church.

Turning north, we pass the school and enter the Kinnaird Park by the south gate, and, proceeding along the carriage drive, pass the old burying ground of Kinnaird, in which are still faint traces of the church. Originally the lands of Kinnaird were situated in the parish of Brechin, but being at a considerable distance from the church the inhabitants resorted for divine service to the chapel of Kuikstoun, which stood about a mile to the north of the present church of Farnell. The earliest notice of Kuikstoun we have seen is in 1435, the then rector being Mr. Robert Wishart. His successor appears to have been "Andream Walterum," who was rector in 1450. Sir Andrew Watson, "parsoune of Kuikstoun,"<sup>1</sup> witnesses a report by George, Bishop of Brechin, regarding the pension of the king's alms by the town of Montrose to the church of Brechin. The last minister of Kuikstoun was Mr. John Wymes, who was transferred to the new church of Kinnaird about 1606. The church of Kuikstoun having fallen into a ruinous state, David Carnegie of Kinnaird commenced the erection of the new church, but his death taking place before the building was complete, his son, afterwards Sir David, finished the work, and had Kinnaird created into a parish, which, after existing for nearly two hundred years, was finally divided between the parishes of Brechin and Farnell. Proceeding, we reach the castle, one of the finest buildings of its kind in Scotland. The house of Kinnaird is first noticed in 1409 in a charter<sup>2</sup> to Duthac de Carnegie of half the town of Kinnaird. This building was burned to the ground by the Earl of Crawford, in revenge for young Carnegie having taken part with the Earl of Huntly against him at the Battle of Brechin. A new house was shortly

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<sup>1</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. ii., p. 384.    <sup>2</sup> *History of the Carnegies.*

afterwards built, and remained with little alteration for about a century. In 1555 extensive additions were made to the castle, the conditions of contract being that the length and breadth of the new houses were to be "measured by the laird's own foot and no other foot of measure." The next additions of any consequence were made in 1779, when the castle was enlarged to very near its present size. In 1854 the present earl, then Sir James Carnegie, commenced a thorough renovation of the old house, large portions of which was pulled down, and the present palatial edifice erected in its stead. The building fills a square of 208 feet by 200 feet, and its highest pinnacle attains an elevation of 115 feet from the ground. He also laid out the policies and deer park, the latter of which is well stocked with the antlered monarchs of the forest. They embrace an area of over thirteen hundred acres, and are enclosed by a high stone wall on three sides, and on the fourth side by the river South Esk, the entire circuit being over six miles. The estate of Kinnaird has been in possession of the Carnegie family, with the exception of a short period during the eighteenth century, since the beginning of the fifteenth century. Duthac de Carnegie obtained one-eighth of the lands of Kinnaird in 1401, and eight years later the half of the same lands, which belonged to Mariota of Kinnaird, whom he is supposed to have married.<sup>1</sup> He acquired the remainder of the estate by purchase in 1417. Duthac de Carnegie was succeeded by his son Walter (already mentioned), whose death took place in 1479. He was succeeded by his son John, who also had a son John, by whom he was succeeded in 1508. John Carnegie of Kinnaird was one of the gentlemen who attended James IV. to Flodden, and being slain in battle, was succeeded by his son Robert, who was promoted, first,

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Carnegies.*



to be one of the Judges of the Court of Session, then Ambassador to England, and received the honour of knighthood shortly after his return, about 1556-7. He died in 1565, and was succeeded by his son John, who was greatly in favour with the unfortunate Queen Mary. So great was her esteem for his fidelity and prudence that she wrote to John of Kinnaird for his advice in the controversy with her nobles in 1570.<sup>1</sup> His death taking place in 1596, he was succeeded by his brother David. This gentleman being bred to the law, he was made a Lord of Session and a member of the Privy Council by James VI. He was also made a Commissioner of the Treasury. Dying in 1598, he was succeeded by his son David, who, like his predecessors, received a considerable amount of royal favour. When James VI. was on his way to England he sent a message to Carnegie as "ane in special"<sup>2</sup> to accompany the Queen and Royal Family to London. For this service he received the honour of knighthood, and in 1616 he was created Lord Carnegie of Kinnaird. The next year (1617) King James VI. visited Kinnaird and enjoyed several days hunting in Munrimmon Forest. On the coronation of Charles I. in 1633, Lord Carnegie was created a peer by the title of Earl of Southesk. After a long life spent in the service of his country, he died at the advanced age of 83 in 1658, and was succeeded by his son James, Second Earl of Southesk. Lord Carnegie was a commander under the Marquis of Montrose in his first expedition to the north in 1639. Ten years later he was a prisoner in England. Being liberated, he went for some time to Holland. After his accession to the titles and estates he was made a Privy Councillor to King Charles II. and Sheriff of the County of Forfar. He died in 1669, and was succeeded by his son Robert, Third Earl. While travelling

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Carnegies.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

in France and Italy Lord Carnegie was made a captain of one of the companies of Scots Guards by Louis XIV. He married the Lady Ann, eldest daughter of the Duke of Hamilton, and by her had a son Charles, Fourth Earl, by whom he was succeeded in 1688. Earl Charles only lived to enjoy the estates for eleven years. He was succeeded by his son James, Fifth Earl, in 1699. This earl was one of the noblemen who met the Earl of Mar at Aboyne to consider the expediency of taking up arms for the restoration of James VIII. In pursuance of the resolution adopted, Carnegie proclaimed James King at Montrose.<sup>1</sup> He was attainted of high treason, and his estates forfeited. The estate of Southesk, like the Lordship of Brechin, was sold to the York Buildings Company, and on their failure, it was purchased by Sir James Carnegie of Pittarrow, cousin of the forfeited earl. He died in 1765, and was succeeded by his son Sir David, who was a gentleman of great worth. At the general election of 1784 he was elected Member of Parliament for the Angus Burghs, then comprising—Montrose, Brechin, Bervie, Arbroath, and Aberdeen. In 1796 he was returned for the County of Forfar, which he continued to represent till his death, which took place in 1805. He was succeeded by his son Sir James Carnegie, who like his father entered Parliament as representative of the Angus Burghs, being returned at the general election of 1830. For many years before his death he retired from taking an active part in public affairs, and lived a retired life with his family at Kinnaird. He was succeeded by his son Sir James Carnegie, Sixth and present Earl. He was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Kincardine in 1849, but resigned the office shortly after disposing of his estate of Strachan in that county to Sir Thomas Gladstone of Fasque. In 1853 Sir James Carnegie renewed the claim

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Carnegies.*

originally made by his father and grandfather to the titles of the Earl of Southesk and Lord Carnegie, and after two years he had the honour of being placed on the roll of peers of Scotland with the same precedence as if no forfeiture had taken place. Lord Southesk is a devoted student of archæology and a poet of no common order. He spends much of his time at Kinnaird Castle.

Leaving Kinnaird by the east gate we cross the South Esk by the Bridge of Dun, and gaining the main road from Brechin to Montrose, we proceed west and notice on the left, about four miles from Brechin, the burying ground of St. Magdalene, in which can still be seen traces of the chapel. The chapel of St. Magdalene belonged to the Trinity Kirk of Brechin. The only chaplain of St. Magdalene, of whom we have seen any record, was Patrick Arbuthnott, third son of Andrew Arbuthnott, of Arbuthnott, and Elizabeth Carnegie, daughter of Sir Robert Carnegie of Kinnaird. He appears to have been but a short time chaplain, and also to have been the last connected with the chapel. The revenues of the chaplainry, which did not exceed £20 Scots, were given by King James VI. to "Patrick Fowlertown, schollar," in 1581 for a period of six years. They were afterwards gifted to "Johnne Bannantyne, schollar," during his lifetime. The lands of Arrat on which the chapel stood originally formed part of the Lordship of Brechin and Navar, and were held by a family of the name of Arrat, as vassals of the Lord of Brechin, till about the middle of the sixteenth century. The estate was shortly after in the possession of James Arbuthnott, brother of the last chaplain of St. Magdalene. He was drowned in crossing the South Esk, and was succeeded by his son Robert, who is designated of Arbuthnott and Arrat. The lands now form part of the Southesk estates. After leaving St. Magdalene's, there is little of importance to notice till we again reach the ancient city.

After a brief stay, we pass along Clerk Street and proceed north. A mile from the town we notice on the left Trinity Muir and Village, the former the site of the Trinity Markets (which, until lately, were second in point of importance in Scotland), and containing the reservoir connected with the Mooran Water; the latter has a number of neat cottages, and during the summer months is the resort of numerous visitors. On the right is Cairnbank House, the residence of F. B. Paton, Esq., a little to the east of which is the scene of the Battle of Brechin. Through the trees on the left Keithock House may be seen. In the early part of the fifteenth century Keithock came into the possession of a junior branch of the House of Edzell,<sup>1</sup> and remained in the family for about a century. It was sold probably to John Oudnay, who is designated "de Keithock," in 1617. The estate was shortly afterwards in possession of a family named Edgar. The last proprietor of this line sold it in 1680 to his cousin David Edgar, father of James Edgar, who was secretary to the chevalier St. George. After the death of the last Edgar of Keithock in 1788,<sup>2</sup> the estate was again sold, and after being in the possession of several proprietors, was recently purchased by W. Morton, Esq. Proceeding east, the road branching off on the left leads to the north by way of Edzell and Fettercairn, that in front by way of North Water Bridge and Laurencekirk. Following the latter, we notice on the left Stracathro House, the residence of James A. Campbell, Esq., M.P. The estates of Stracathro and Smiddyhill were for a long period in the possession of the family of Turnbull, one of whom, Andrew, collected the rental of the Bishopric of Brechin for the years 1689-91.<sup>3</sup> They were purchased by Sir James Campbell, father of the present proprietor, about the middle

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<sup>1</sup> *Land of the Lindsays*, p. 337.

<sup>2</sup> *House of Edgar*, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. ii., p. 440.



of the present century. A short distance north-west of the house is Stracathro Church, where Baliol is said to have made his submission to Edward I. of England. A statement of the condition of the parish of Stracathro was drawn up and submitted to the Privy Council about the year 1583. This document bore that the yearly rental which belonged to the minister amounted to only "ane hundreth threttie thri pundis sex schillings viiid." This sum being considered inadequate to maintain a minister, the vicarage (which formerly belonged to the Chanter of Brechin) was added to the parsonage. In 1618 the adjoining parish of Dunlappie<sup>1</sup> was suppressed and united to Stracathro. The church was considerably enlarged a few years ago by the present proprietor. Stracathro was the scene of a great battle about the year 1133 between David I. of Scotland and Angus, Earl of Moray,<sup>2</sup> in which over five thousand men were slain. Leaving the church, we pass the school and school-house on the left, and regain the road to Edzell, at the village of Inchbare, where we cross the West Water by a narrow stone bridge, and notice on the right the farm of West Side. On the left, near the north end of the wood, and nearly concealed by trees, is a large conical mound (called the Gallows Hill), where the doomsters to the lairds of Edzell performed their ghastly services.<sup>3</sup> Just before entering the village we pass under a

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<sup>1</sup> *Memorials of Angus and Mearns*, p. 425. Andrew Miln, master of the Grammar School of Montrose and preceptor of the celebrated James Melvell, was minister of the united parishes of Stracathro and Dunlappie from 1571 to 1578.

<sup>2</sup> *Memorials of Angus and Mearns*, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> The doomster of Edzell had for his services a free grant of eleven acres of land, called Duray Hill, situated a little to the east of the village, from the proprietor, "two pecks of oat meal from each of the principal tenants, and a bassyfull from each sub-tenant." To these were added the right to fish in the "wishop burn and to hunt

memorial arch erected to the memory of John, Earl of Dalhousie, and his Countess. Edzell village consists of two streets running parallel to each other, and connected by several narrow closes. It contains an Established and Free Church, a Public School, Bank, two Hotels, a number of shops, and several good villas. There is little or no trade, and the quiet easy-going villagers are almost entirely dependent on the numerous visitors who resort thither during the summer months. About a mile north from the village is Gannachy Bridge and shooting lodge. The former, which spans the North Esk at a height of about eighty feet above the bed of the river, was built in 1723 by James Black, tenant in the Wood of Dalbog. The bridge was originally only half its present width, and remained so till 1795, when it was widened by Lord Panmure, and Lord Adam Gordon, proprietor of the estate of the Burn. The scenery around this spot is unequalled by few places in Scotland, but a description of it does not lie within the scope of this work.

We will now retrace our steps to the village, and proceed west along the Lethnot road. About a mile west we notice Edzell Castle. These gigantic ruins are the most magnificent of any in the counties of Angus and Mearns. The keep or Stirling tower, although the oldest part of the building, is still the most entire, and, although roofless, is still an imposing structure.

The estate of Edzell, including those of Lethnot and Glenesk, were in possession of the family of Stirling during the latter part of the thirteenth century, but the male line failing, they fell to Sir Alexander Lindsay through his wife Catherine, a daughter of the last Stirling of Edzell, about the year 1357.<sup>1</sup> Sir Alexander died while on his way to

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on the Hill of Wirran, with a hawk blind on an eye and a hound crippled on a leg."

<sup>1</sup> *Land of the Lindsays*, p. 31.

Jerusalem in 1382, and was succeeded by his son Sir David, whose valiant deeds have become matter of history.<sup>1</sup> Sir David married Elizabeth, daughter of Robert II., and was created Earl of Crawford in 1398. His eldest son Alexander succeeded him in 1407, and was one of the hostages for James I. He died in 1438, and was succeeded by his son David, Third Earl. Crawford joined the Douglas League, which had set itself to overturn the royal authority, and was the chief means of ousting Chancellor Crichton. Bishop Kennedy of St. Andrews having used his influence on behalf of the injured statesman, Crawford "harried" his lands, for which he was excommunicated for a year. He was mortally wounded at the Battle of Arbroath, which arose out of a clan feud between the Lindsays and the Ogilvys in 1445.<sup>2</sup> Crawford was anxious to avert the fight, and galloping up between the lines, was struck by a soldier who resented his interference. This untimely act so enraged the Lindsays that they attacked their foes with a fury seldom witnessed even in clan warfare. The Ogilvys were nearly all cut to pieces, five hundred of their men being left dead on the field. The wounded earl was carried to his castle at Finavon, where, after a week of lingering torture, he died, and was succeeded by his son Alexander, afterwards known as the "Tiger Earl" and "Earl Beardie." The Douglas League being still in force, was rigidly adhered to by all parties, and no sooner did Crawford hear of the murder of Douglas than he summoned his kinsmen and vassals throughout Angus. Learning that the Earl of Huntly was marching southward at the head

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<sup>1</sup> It is only necessary to mention his victory over Lord Welles at the famous tournament at London Bridge in 1395, and his dreadful encounter with the Wolf of Badenroch's natural son at Glenbrierachan.

<sup>2</sup> *Land of the Lindsays*, p. 175.

of a large force, he determined to check his progress. Marshalling his retainers at Finavon, he marched north, evidently with the intention of defending the passage of the North Esk at the King's Ford. Huntly, however, had crossed the river before he came up.

“And as he neared the fatal plain,  
Where Baliol lost his sway,  
Lord Huntly and the royal train  
Appeared in full array.”

The rebels being completely routed, Crawford fled to Finavon Castle, and after calling for a cup of wine, he gave utterance to the extraordinary exclamation, that rather than have lost the day, “he would have been content to hing seven years in hell by the breees o’ the ee.” Crawford’s conduct so incited the king against him that he vowed not only to disinherit him, but to make the highest stone of his castle the lowest.<sup>1</sup> He was, however, eventually pardoned, and restored to his estates and titles. He died in 1454, and was succeeded by his son David, who, being a minor, was placed under the guardianship of his uncle, Walter of Beaufort. Earl David was among the first to take active steps for the release of James III. from the tyranny of the Boyd faction. He continued a steady supporter of the king, and was mainly instrumental in routing the insurrectionists at the Rising of Blackness, for which he was created Duke of Montrose.<sup>2</sup> Walter of Beaufort exchanged his estates in Inverness with his nephew for the Barony of Fearn, to which was afterwards added Edzell. Having secured the favour and confidence of his illustrious

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<sup>1</sup> In fulfilment of his vow King James, after pardoning Crawford, ascended to the top of the Castle of Finavon, and taking a stone from the parapet threw it to the ground. The stone was long fixed to the foot of the keep by an iron chain.

<sup>2</sup> *Land of the Lindsays*, p. 188.



chief, he soon gained an ascendancy over the person and authority of his cousin, the Chief of the Ogilvys, and from him, as hereditary holder, he obtained the Sheriffship of Angus, which he used for his own aggrandisement, and soon became an influential and extensive landowner. He was succeeded by his son Sir David, who assumed the style and designation of Edzell. Like his father, he was frequently arraigned at the Bar of the Lords of Council for sundry acts of spoilation. His only son Walter, by his first marriage, fell at the Battle of Flodden, leaving four sons, whom Edzell attempted to disinherit, by changing the succession to the sons of his second marriage. James V. however foiled the attempt, and declared Walter, eldest son, to be "the righteous heritour." Sir David died in 1528, and was succeeded by his grandson David, who ultimately became Ninth Earl of Crawford, in consequence of the "wicked master," son of the Eighth Earl, having forfeited his right through an unnatural persecution of his father. Notwithstanding Earl David having a large family of his own, he adopted the son of the "wicked master" for the purpose of having the titles and estates restored to him, and applying to Parliament, had his wishes confirmed by royal consent. David Lindsay thus succeeded to the Earldom of Crawford and all the estates, except those of Edzell, Glenesk, and Fearn. Earl David died in 1553, and was succeeded in the Edzell estates by his son Sir David, afterwards Lord Edzell. In early life Lord Edzell displayed all the haughty hot-headedness of the feudal times in which he lived. An insult offered to himself or to any of his clan was never forgiven, and in some instances was satisfied only by the blood of the offender. His latter years were, however, devoted to the embellishment of his castle, the improvement of his estates, and the prosperity of his retainers. He planned the village of Edzell, which was latterly erected into a burgh of barony, with a monthly fair, to which the

tenants on the Edzell and Glenesk estates were allowed to bring their stock free of custom. The closing years of this great man's life were clouded by the reckless character of his eldest son, who was the principal actor in the murder of Lord Spynie in Edinburgh in 1607. Lord Edzell died in 1610, and was succeeded by his son David, who was granted a remission for the murder of Lord Spynie on payment of ten thousand merks. His only son having predeceased him, he was succeeded by his nephew John Lindsay of Canterland, who held the office of Sheriff of Forfarshire for some time. The "harrying" of the lands of Glenesk by the Marquis of Montrose gave such a blow to the house of Edzell that it never recovered. So embarrassed was this laird that he claimed and got exemption from contributing to the new levies raised in 1630. He was strongly attached to the cause of the Covenant, for which he was fined by the Earl of Middleton the large sum of £3000. He died in 1671, and was succeeded by his son David; whose extravagant character tended to further embarrass rather than improve the shattered fortunes of the House of Edzell. He ended an inglorious career in 1698, and was succeeded by his son David, the last Lindsay of Edzell, who, after a few years of reckless expenditure, sold the estates to James, Fourth Earl of Panmure in 1744.<sup>1</sup> Lindsay terminated a miserable existence as a common stableman at an inn in Kirkwall about the middle of the last century.

At least two royal personages have graced Edzell Castle with their presence. The unfortunate Mary while on her return journey from the north in 1562 was the guest of Lord Lindsay, and remained one night<sup>2</sup>—the room she

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<sup>1</sup> For the further history of the proprietors of Edzell see Brechin Castle.

<sup>2</sup> *Land of the Lindsays*, p. 64. Lindsay afterwards forced her to resign the crown in Lochleven Castle.

occupied being ever after designated the Queen's chamber. James VI. also honoured Edzell with his presence in 1583. As already noticed, the keep or Stirling tower is the oldest part of the building. There is reason to believe it was erected by the Stirling family during the thirteenth century. Its walls are eight feet thick, and about sixty feet high. The floor of the dining-room is still complete, being formed by the arched roofs of the gloomy vaults below. The whole of the buildings north from the tower were the work of David of Edzell before his succession as Ninth Earl of Crawford.<sup>1</sup> The garden wall, summer-house, and probably the baths, were the work of Lord Edzell. The flower garden, including the walls, which are about five feet thick, measures one hundred and eighty feet by one hundred and forty-six feet. The east, south, and west walls are decorated with beautiful carvings of the celestial deities, the sciences, and the theological and cardinal virtues. Between each of the figures are placed compartments representing the fesse chequy of the Lindsays, and the three stars of the Stirlings of Glenesk. Over the west door is a shield bearing the arms and initials of David, Lord Edzell, and his wife, Dame Isabella Forbes, with the date 1604. The main entrance to the building is on the west side, through an arched corridor, seven feet wide, having stone seats along both sides, on which the poor of the parish sat when they came to receive their daily allowance of meat from the well filled larder of "the kitchen of Angus."<sup>2</sup> The building remained in almost all its princely grandeur till 1746, when the Argyle Highlanders, who were sent to purge the country of Jacobites, took

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<sup>1</sup> *Land of the Lindsays*, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> The name by which Edzell Castle was familiarly known, on account of the magnificent style of its cookery—bullocks being roasted whole, and every thing else conducted on a similar scale.

up their quarters in it, and began the work of spoliation. The fine oak carved work which adorned its walls was ruthlessly torn down and burned in their camp fires ; but the final blow was given in 1764, when the whole of the roofs and fittings were sold for behoof of the York Building Company's creditors. Every thing moveable was carried away, even the walls did not escape the general demolition, till the Second Baron Panmure arrested the hands of the destroyer, and the only wonder now is that after over a century of spoliation so much remains. Near by the castle is the old graveyard, with the burial aisle of the Lindsays. The Church of Edzell was dedicated to St. Lawrence, and attached to the See of St. Andrews. In this secluded spot, which is still the place of sepulture, are several old tombstones, but with few exceptions the epitaphs are uninteresting. The old building, in which so many of the proud Lords of Edzell bowed the knee, having fallen into a ruinous condition, the present church at the north end of the village was erected, the site being much nearer to the majority of the parishioners.

We now enter the glen of Lethnot, and proceeding westward for about four miles, notice on the left the Church. Previous to 1723 Glenesk and Lethnot were served by one minister, but in that year Glenesk or Lochlee was erected into a separate parish, and a few years after the adjoining parish of Navar was joined to Lethnot. As already stated, the Church of Lethnot was erected into a prebend of the Cathedral of Brechin by Sir David Lindsay, who granted large mortifications for its support from the lands of Drumcairn and others in the neighbourhood. The Duke of Montrose also endowed a religious service from these lands, the daily mass to be called "the Duke's Mess of Montrose." The present church was erected in 1827,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Two of the oak beams of the original roof are built into the back



probably on the foundations of a former building, part of which has been preserved in two stones forming the base of the belfry, and bearing respectively "1672.N" and "17.J.R.42." The first refers to the incumbency of Mr. Robert Norrie, and the other to Mr. John Row, to whose memory a tablet is erected in the north wall of the church. A few years ago, while making excavations in the floor, the workmen came upon a large stone coffin, which they unceremoniously broke in pieces and used the material in building part of a wall. The Rev. F. Cruickshanks, the minister, was from home, and only learned by accident of the discovery on his return. He made every effort to collect the pieces, but was only partially successful. What remains of the shattered tomb is placed against the south wall. At the same time was picked up a small fragment of a Celtic cross, beautifully ornamented on one side, and bearing on the other the letters "FILII MEDICII."<sup>1</sup> The coffin is supposed to have contained the remains of a former minister, who left money for the purpose of giving a lead roof to the church, from which circumstance it was called the "lead kirk." In the graveyard are several interesting tombstones. One, to the memory of James Black,<sup>2</sup> who built Gannachy Bridge, bears,—

" No bridge on earth can be a pass for Heaven,  
To generous deeds let yet due praise be given."

Another to two youths, who lost their lives by drowning in attempting to cross the West Water while in flood at Stonyford, bears a long epitaph by the author of *The Minstrel*. And one to Peter Grant, better known as

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wall about three feet from the floor. The building below this point has the appearance of being part of the original wall.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of Soc. of Antiq.*, p. 188.

<sup>2</sup> Besides building Gannachy Bridge, Mr. Black left 1000 merks for other bridges and pious uses.

“Doubrach,”<sup>1</sup> who resided for some years in the glen, and lived to the age of 110.

Previous to 1746 an Episcopal Chapel stood at the Clochie, but in that year it shared the fate of many of its sister churches at the hands of Cumberland’s soldiers, who compelled one of the most devoted adherents to Episcopacy to carry straw and burning peats from his own dwelling, and set fire to his beloved meeting house.

A short distance from the church we cross the water by a handsome stone bridge, and notice Bridgend Cottage, erected for “Lady Annie,” “Doubrach’s” daughter, by Lord Panmure. The road on the right leads to the head of the glen, near which is Hunthill Shooting Lodge. Turning to the left, we notice the Churchyard of Navar, with its neat little belfry, erected in 1773 by a number of tenants in the parish for the accommodation of a bell, which Mr. John Fyffe, who was minister of the parish about the middle of the seventeenth century, presented to the church. It was tolled on Sundays, fast-days, and at funerals, but was removed in 1827, and now lies in Arbroath Museum.<sup>2</sup> Close by the graveyard is the farm of Blairno, where the late Jonathan Duncan, governor of the Presidency of Bombay, was born.

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<sup>1</sup> A name given him from a small farm in Braemar, of which he was tenant. He was taken prisoner at Culloden, and carried to Carlisle, but making his escape, he returned to his native hills. He ultimately settled in Lethnot. In 1820 a detailed account of his career was drawn up and submitted to King George IV. This document was signed by himself as the king’s oldest enemy, he being then in his 106th year. His majesty was pleased to grant him a pension of a guinea a week during his life, to be continued to his daughter, should she survive him.

<sup>2</sup> The Navar bell was removed in 1827 by order of Lord Panmure, and taken to the Church of Arbirlot, where it was cracked. It has the following inscription :—

“SOLI . DEO . GLORIA . C . OVDEROGGE . FECIT . ROTTERDAM 1655.  
M . Io . Fifus . pastor . Navarensis . dono . dedit.”

We now ascend the Hill of Caterthun, which is crowned by two Pictish or Caledonian forts, both similar in construction—that on the left is composed of earth; the one on the right consists of a huge rampart of loose stones, measuring about one hundred feet wide at the base, and about twenty-six at the top, surrounded by a ditch and breast-work of earth. The space enclosed is four hundred and thirty-six feet long by two hundred feet wide. A second line of entrenchments is carried round the slope of the hill about fifty yards distant from the ditch. According to some authorities Caterthun was the scene of the Battle of Mons Grampus, between the Caledonians and the Romans. The southern slopes of the hill was a royal hunting forest in which was the hermitage of the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Peter de Spalding, who delivered Berwick into the hands of Bruce, was made keeper of the forest of Kilgarie in 1319.<sup>1</sup> John Smith, a Brechin citizen, got a royal charter upon the hermitage in 1445.<sup>2</sup> Smith was probably the last hermit. He sold his interest to Symmer of Balzeordie in 1461 for the payment of a merk yearly.<sup>3</sup> Descending the hill, we notice Balzeordie. This estate was in the possession of the family of Symmers from at least the middle of the fifteenth century till the middle of the eighteenth, when it was annexed to Balnamoon by purchase.

We next notice Balnamoon House about a mile to the south-east. The estate of Balnamoon was for a considerable period in the possession of the family of Collace, one of whom as we have seen acquired some historical note for the part he played at the Battle of Bréchin. Thomas of Collace for his services at the Battle of Blackness got a grant from James III. of half the forest of Kilgarie in 1488.<sup>4</sup> About a

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<sup>1</sup> *Land of the Lindsays*, p. 308.    <sup>2</sup> *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, vol. ii., p. 382.

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Carnegies.*    <sup>4</sup> *Land of the Lindsays*, p. 212.

century later one of the family built the house. John Collace was served heir to the lands in 1632, and shortly afterwards disposed of them to Sir Alexander Carnegie, brother of the First Earl of Southesk. Alexander Carnegie of Balnamoon joined Mar's rebellion, and had his estate forfeited. He reacquired it by purchase in 1728. He was succeeded by James Carnegie Arbuthnott, commonly known as the "rebel laird." Carnegie was a staunch adherent to the Stewart cause, and was present at the Battle of Culloden, for which he was outlawed. For a time he found shelter among his own tenants, but the place of his concealment being discovered, he took refuge in Glenesk.<sup>1</sup> His estates were restored in 1748. He was succeeded in 1791 by his son James Carnegie, who died unmarried in 1810, and was succeeded by his nephew, James Carnegie Knox, father of the present proprietrix. We now turn south past Findowrie, and gaining the high road from Brechin to Forfar, notice Careston Castle. In the earliest notices of Careston it was in the possession of the family of Dempster. Andrew Dempster of Careston had the office of heritable Dempster to the Parliaments confirmed to him by Robert II. in 1379.<sup>2</sup> About a century later David Dempster of Careston was cited before the Lords of Council, and ordered to reconvey certain lands to the Church of Brechin, of which he held

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<sup>1</sup> Carnegie's place of retreat is still known as "Bonnymunes Cave." While lying in concealment he had many narrow escapes. On one occasion having gone to a neighbouring farm house a company of soldiers entered the room in quest of him while he was sitting warming himself by the fire. The old farmer at once apprehended the danger, and gruffly ordered him to make room for the "gentlemen," and go and clean the byre. Being disguised as a shepherd he escaped suspicion, and long before the soldiers had finished the entertainment prepared for them, the fugitive was safe in his retreat.

<sup>2</sup> *Land of the Lindsays*, p. 280.



wrongous possession. After remaining in the possession of the Dempster family till about the close of the sixteenth century, Careston came into the possession of Sir Hendry Lindsay of Kinfauns, who built the castle, which Ochterlonie describes as "a great and most delicat house, well built, brave lights, and of most excellent contrivance, without debait the best gentleman's house in the shyre." The garden and policies are unequalled in the country. Sir Alexander Carnegie of Balnamoon is said to have got the Barony of Careston in lieu of the expenses of a law suit which he carried on for the Lindsays.<sup>1</sup> The Carnegie family remained in possession till 1707, when it was purchased by Sir John Stewart of Grantully. Sir John sold it in 1721 to Major George Skene, who was succeeded by his grandson, afterwards chief of the family of Skene of Skene. The wild and drunken adventures of this laird, in company with his friend and companion the rebel laird of Balnamoon, are preserved in numerous singular anecdotes. The male line of Skene failing, the estate fell to James, Fourth Earl of Fife, whose son James, Fifth Earl, sold it to John Adamson, Esq., the present proprietor. About half a mile from the castle is the church. The church and parish of Careston are of recent origin. Sir Alexander Carnegie of Balnamoon and Careston "takand christeanlie to his consideration the ignorance of his tenants" and "finding the case, cause, and occasion thereof to proceed from the distance of thair dwelling to thair paroch Kirk of Brechin," built the church in 1636, but in consequence of the strenuous opposition to the disjunction, the act for erecting Careston into a separate parish was not got till 1641. Mr. David Campbell, who married a daughter of the founder, was probably the first minister of Careston. He was transferred to Menmuir about 1649. The present incumbent is the

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<sup>1</sup> *New Statistical Account of Forfarshire*, p. 529.

fifteenth who has held the living. On again reaching the main road we proceed east by Barrelwell, and once more arrive in Brechin, having done our best to describe the different places of interest in and around our much admired "Ancient City."









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